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THE INDYPENDER 15

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2015

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EDITOR'S CORNER

LET US DREAM TOGETHER

To publish a newspaper is to live a circular existence. Over the course of a month, there are writers to be contacted, story budgets to be updated, fundraisers to be organized, edits to be completed. Then there's the final stretch of all-nighters with our production team as the pages are designed and proofed, headlines and captions written, final changes made and then — with the press of a computer key — the whole month's work is sent to the printer.

It's exhausting and exhilarating. And as one cycle ends, another beckons. But before diving back into all that, one of my favorite tasks is to go out for at least one day with our delivery truck and help drop off papers.

It's eight hours of loping in and out of the archipelago of libraries and laundromats, bookstores, cafes and community centers that carry *The Independent*. Unplugged from the computer and traveling from one New York City neighborhood to the next, it's a chance for me to see first-hand how well the previous issue moved, chat with the people who carry our paper and with readers who approach asking for a copy before I have even opened the bundle tucked under my arm.

Each time I go out, I feel like I'm participating in a small miracle. Quite simply, a newspaper like this — with high editorial and design standards but unabashedly leftist, perpetually underfunded and volunteer-based — is not supposed to exist, at least not for very long.

Yet, here we are celebrating our 15th anniversary.

Since its inception, *The Independent* has told the stories of grassroots social movements and the causes they fight for. We've done so on a budget that has never exceeded \$100,000 per year. With this issue, we thought we would take a moment to share our own story, reflect on what we've learned from our experiences and look to the future.

The 15th anniversary special section that runs from page 9 to 16 features highlights of our best coverage over the years. There are also personal stories from seven people who have worked on the paper, plus a recounting of some lessons learned along the way that may be of use to other organizations and activists as well.

Looking back over the past decade and a half, what stands out to me is that in a society where success is almost always defined in individual terms, the Indy's ability to survive and thrive is a success story collectively authored by the hundreds of people who have worked on the paper as well as the hundreds more who have supported it financially.

What accounts for the fierce devotion of so many Indy volunteers and readers over the years? I think the answer lies in the larger media landscape, in which a handful of enormous media corporations dominate public life. In such a setting, this paper stands out as a rare media institution that belongs to "us" and can speak the truth in a way the corporate media never could.

As the best-selling author Naomi Klein said at a 2008 benefit on our behalf, "the Indy reminds us that we exist."

Seen from afar, the Indy has appeared with clockwork consistency every month, year after year. Nonetheless, the paper has been in a financially precarious condition for most of its history.

As we begin our 15th anniversary year, the Indy is at a crucial juncture. Our most basic need is to increase reader support by an average of \$5,000 per month. This ask is detailed on page 16. It is the difference between us having to constantly divert our

time and energy into shoring up our finances and being able to give our full attention to the work we really ought to be doing.

But we aspire to more than mere financial stability.

THINKING BIG

Let us dream together for a moment about what a financially flush and fully turbo-charged *Indypendent* could mean for the New York left and the life of this city. With a budget of \$400,000 a year, we could increase our paid staff, go biweekly, set up outdoor boxes and be at key subway stations, tripling our current 20,000 print run while dramatically increasing our online presence at indypendent.org. With \$800,000 a year, we could go weekly.

This is both a lot of money and very little compared to the wealth sloshing around this city.

But what difference does a newspaper make? In New York, the answer is still quite a lot. Think of how the tabloids demonized the homeless this summer, manufactured the Times Square topless "scandal" and assisted the police unions in flipping the mayor — who is the father of a Black teenage son — from a cautious sympathizer with last fall's Black Lives Matter protests into the bleating captive of the worst elements in the NYPD.

Two years from now, the tabloids will move in for the kill, along with legions of 1 percenters, the police unions, the public education privatizers and others who want a Bloomberg/Giuliani-style restoration.

THE INDEPENDENT HAS THRIVED AGAINST ALL ODDS FOR 15 YEARS. WITH READER SUPPORT, THERE'S STILL MUCH MORE WE CAN ACCOMPLISH.

Now imagine having a thoughtful, fearless newspaper in New York that could offer a powerful riposte to the phony right-wing populism of the *Post* and the *Daily News* as well as the smug, out-of-touch liberalism of the *Times*. That paper could do some agenda-setting itself while reflecting and fostering the culture of hope and resistance that progressive social movements flourish in.

The Indy will always be the underdog. But, we've beaten the odds for 15 years and still have so much more room to grow. If you want to help us make something big happen, let's be in touch. Meanwhile, we need to address the more immediate challenge of stabilizing this paper financially once and for all.

Enjoy reading the special section. If you feel inspired like we do, please heed the call on page 16 and become a sustaining member at whatever level works for you. There's much more the Indy can achieve and whatever we do, it will be a success collectively shared by many.

— John Tarleton

EXECUTIVE EDITOR & CO-FOUNDER

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RATS!

LANDLORD GETS TAX BREAKS, BRONX TENANTS GET SQUALOR, RENT HIKES

BY STEVEN WISHNIA

In the depths of the crack era, 1111 Gerard Avenue was an oasis in the Bronx. “When I first moved here in 1991, the building was beautiful,” says Abigail Diaz. “If they saw the floor needed polishing, they would do it.”

While the residents of 70-year-old tenements nearby were shivering without heat for months in the winter and worried about their kids being poisoned by lead paint dust, 1111 Gerard, which sits on the slope between the Grand Concourse and Jerome Avenue, was brand new.

At a time when the 44th Precinct averaged one murder every four days, the building had video security, so residents could look on Channel 8 to see who was ringing their buzzer. There was a playground out back with slides and monkey bars. And in order to receive tax breaks from the 421(a) program, the owners agreed to set rents low and keep it rent-stabilized for the next 25 years. You could rent one of the 122 apartments for around \$400 a month.

Now, Diaz says, “the building is disgusting.” The playground is gone, and kids play soccer in the backyard between piles of garbage bags. The side doors are unlocked and a stairwell reeks of urine, somewhere between human and feline. In the last year, the landlord has been raising rents by as much as 40 percent.

“They have added over \$200 for a one-

year lease,” says Jacqueline Yebo-rah, a Ghana-born mother of three young children who had her rent raised last month from \$988 to \$1,195. If she had wanted a two-year lease, she says, it would have gone up \$400. Yebo-rah’s apartment is supposed to be rent-stabilized, so the maximum legal increase would have been less than \$10 for one year and about \$27 for two years. She says the landlord told her the tax-subsidy restrictions were “no longer in effect.”

In early August, 18 tenants filed a lawsuit in Bronx Supreme Court accusing the owner, Shree Ganesh Bronx LLC, of illegally raising their rents. They want the court to rule that the apartments are still rent-stabilized and order the owner, a Long Island-based firm that bought the building in 2010 for \$8.6 million, to reimburse tenants for overcharges.

In a response filed September 1, Shree Ganesh Bronx denied all of the more than 200 allegations in the suit, except for admitting that it owned the building, the plaintiffs were tenants and it had tried to evict some of them. It demanded that the suit be dismissed, claiming that the tenants had no legal rights to sue, there was “no genuine dispute” and “some or all” of the plaintiffs were not living there as their primary residence.

The status of 1111 Gerard Avenue is not typical of rent-stabilized buildings, but it is an example of the many ways landlords find to jack up rents beyond the legal limit. A 2011 survey by the housing-activist group Make the Road New York found that at least

45 percent of the 200 apartments in its sample had illegally high rents — and those were all apartments that were still rent-stabilized and where the landlord had registered the rent history with the state.

Ironically, Shree Ganesh Bronx could have begun deregulating the building legally in 2017, when the tax subsidies expire, if it had followed proper procedures, says Carolyn Norton of Legal Services NYC, a lawyer representing the tenants.

“It’s not that this building could stay rent-stabilized forever, but the landlord didn’t follow the rules,” she says. “Their apartments should be rent-stabilized as long as they live there.”

First, Norton says, in buildings that will become deregulated once tax breaks expire, landlords are required to warn tenants every time they renew their leases that their rents will not be permanently limited. The owners of 1111 Gerard never did, she says, and the penalty for that is that apartments must be kept rent-stabilized as long as the current tenant lives there.

Second, Norton says, the building’s owners have been unlawfully registering its rents with the state housing agency since it opened, listing them as much more than the tenant was actually paying. In 1991, she explains, the original owner registered a \$407 per month apartment at \$703. This is a common scam used to make massive rent increases

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YINSHI W NEWS/ST



STEVEN WISHNIA

TRASH TALKING: Children play soccer near piles of trash at 1111 Gerard Ave. in the Bronx. “You come here at night, you can see a thousand rats,” a tenant said.

TENANTS SPEAK OUT: (Left, on mic) Jacqueline Yebo-rah, a Ghanaian mother of three young children, speaks at a tenant rally outside 1111 Gerard.

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AUTHOR OF *ONE HUNDRED JOBS: A PANORAMA OF WORK IN THE AMERICAN CITY*, PROFESSOR OF JOURNALISM AT BROOKLYN COLLEGE AND MENTOR TO SOME OF *THE INDYPENDENT*’S BEST YOUNG WRITERS.

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A DECISIVE YEAR FOR NYC'S EMBATTLED PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BY LEONIE HAIMSON

With 1.1 million students in over 1,800 schools, New York City's public school system is the largest in the nation. And for more than a decade it has been a special target of self-styled "reformers" — many with ties to Wall Street and the corporate world — who have sought to impose a rigid, top-down model of education that ignores the real needs of students while disempowering parents and communities.

Corporate-style education reform has bred increasing resistance. In many ways, this year will be decisive for New York City's embattled public schools. We have a new state education commissioner, MaryEllen Elia, a former superintendent from Florida, who took office on July 1. With more than 220,000 students who opted out of standardized state exams last year, Elia must figure out how to address the massive disaffection of parents with the current state policies. Though the number of kids opting out was much lower here in the city, the

number of opt-outs was still three times larger than the year before.

Opposition to the Common Core standards, curriculum and high-stakes tests is rapidly growing among both parents and educators, because of the resources and time they consume, the stress they cause kids and the way in which they reduce real learning to rote test prep and worksheets. Initially, Elia took a hard line on the issue, saying she thought teachers who encouraged opting out were "unethical" and making vague threats that schools with high numbers of opt-outs could lose funding. More recently, she has backtracked and moderated her tone after her comments prompted a backlash.

Other issues Elia will be pressed to address include the failure of the state to enforce a 2010 law that requires charter schools to serve equal numbers of high-needs students as public schools before they are renewed or allowed to expand, and the state's refusal to implement a 2014 law to protect student privacy, which grew out of the battle against the multi-state data sharing project called inBloom.

FARIÑA & DE BLASIO

At the same time, Chancellor Carmen Fariña will be beginning her second full year at the helm of the city's public schools. Mayor Bill de Blasio and the chancellor have introduced many important reforms, including expanding pre-K education to all 4-year-olds and providing wraparound services at many struggling schools — called the "Renewal" schools — at risk of being closed by the state. More recently, in a well-publicized speech, the mayor announced plans to add second grade reading specialists and new classes in algebra and computer coding and on the advanced placement level.

Both the mayor and chancellor claim to be more responsive to parents' input than the previous administration, and in a recent press release, the chancellor said, "The more we listen to the feedback of students, parents and teachers, the better our schools are going to be." Yet

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MICHAEL GRANT

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THE MAN WHO WOULD BE KING

SELF-MADE MAN? HERE'S HOW TRUMP REALLY GOT RICH

BY PETER RUGH

Wayne Barrett recalls a night in 1991 spent gazing up at 106 Central Park South. Ten years earlier, the 36-story building, a former hotel designed in the art deco style of the 1930s, was purchased by Donald Trump, renovated and converted into luxury condos. As a reporter for the *Village Voice* the veteran investigative journalist had spent most of his career tracking Trump, covering his shady financial dealings through the 1970s and '80s and watching as the golden-haired playboy rose to become one of New York's wealthiest and most recognizable developers.

Barrett remembers that looking at the apartment complex, only one light went on during the entire night. "Nobody was living there," he recently told *The Independent*. "To the degree that Donald has built housing at all it's mostly for corporate tenants. The kind that buy apartments and when one of their executives visits from Japan they stay there a couple nights a week."

Such a revelation would be of little interest to people living outside of the New York area, except that Trump has licensed his name to building projects around the globe, several of which have gone bankrupt. More important, he is the leading Republican candidate for president and his position at the top of the GOP field is based in large part on the image he has cultivated for himself, through books and media appearances, as that of a self-made man and expert negotiator who has overseen developments unparalleled in scale.

When Univision reporter Jorge Ramos asked Trump in August how he was going to build a 1,900-mile wall along the border with Mexico, a central aspect of the candidate's immigration, or rather, anti-immigration plan, Trump replied: "I'm a builder. That's easy. ... What's more complicated is building a building that's 95 stories tall." Writing in his recently re-issued political manifesto, *Time to Get Tough: Make America Great Again!*, Trump proclaimed that on the world stage America needs "hard-driving, vicious cutthroat financial killers" such as himself, "the kind of people who leave blood all over the boardroom table and fight to the bitter end to gain maximum advantage" over evil predators like China and OPEC. Gone will be "these cream puff 'diplomats' Obama sends around the globe to play patty cake with foreign governments."

Trump has smoothly pivoted off the reality TV stage — where once a week for the past nine years a prime-time audience of millions was treated to the spectacle of him firing people on NBC's "The Apprentice" and its later reincarnation, "Celebrity Apprentice" — and onto soap boxes in Iowa, Alabama and New Hampshire. But the myth of the sorcerer's apprentice is probably more analogous to Trump's story than that of expert king of

industry. The financial empire upon which he has staked his reputation is largely built on hot air. The Republican Party which taps into white racial angst to build political support, the media that have bought into and promoted his hollow self-image and, less well-known, succeeding local and federal government administrations, have all advertently or inadvertently lent a hand in casting the Trump spell currently gripping the nation. If voters are not careful, they will be swindled like so many of Trump's investors.

TRUMP VS. TENANTS

With the 1981 purchase of 106 Central Park South, Trump secured not only the hotel but an adjacent apartment complex at 100 Central Park South. The two buildings were part of what was known at the time as Barbizon Plaza but were soon added to the long list of properties to which the tycoon lent his name. They were rechristened "Trump Parc."

"In order to derive the most value from the site," Trump wrote in his 1987 memoir *The Art of the Deal*, he initially planned "to knock down both buildings and construct in their place one huge, beautiful, modern luxury condominium tower."

But the tenants living in rent-controlled apartments at 100 Central Park South weren't eager to vacate. They took the Trump Organization to court, complaining of harassment. Trump in turn smeared them in the press as wealthy moochers too cheap to pay market rates for their homes. He also made an offer to then-Mayor Ed Koch to house homeless people in the building's vacant apartments, not out of a good Samaritan instinct, but in the hope that the rent-controlled tenants would flee. Koch rejected Trump's proposition.

By 1998 Trump struck a deal with the building's remaining inhabitants that allowed them to either purchase their apartments at a markdown or to keep renting without further pressure to leave. Meanwhile, 106 Central Park South offers a glimpse of the kind of housing Trump would have built next door had he had the chance: the type of property that has become all too common in New York over the last two decades, luxury developments that sit largely vacant accruing value for their super-wealthy owners.

In Wayne Barrett's estimation, Trump's father, Fred, was a much more successful builder than his son. "He built 20,000 units of real housing for real people," he said. "Good housing. Single-family units, multi-family units that stretched all over Brooklyn and Queens. Most of it is still lived in and enjoyed today. He did remarkable work. People loved it and your average working-class family could buy it or rent it." Yet, Barrett added, both father and son were "state capitalists or crony capitalists of the worst order."



GOVERNMENT HANDOUTS

That's because the pair amassed their fortunes thanks in large part to government assistance, a narrative that conflicts sharply with the image of the self-made man Donald Trump has promoted in his numerous books, on his reality television shows and now on the campaign trail. Even Friedrich Drumpf, Trump's grandfather, relied on a government handout. In his case, the U.S. Army cleared routes through Alaska into Canadian Yukon Territory by displacing Inuit tribes ahead of the Klondike gold rush. It was deep in those expropriated Arctic regions where Friedrich operated a saloon, brothel and dining hall, the beginnings of the Trump fortune.

Through the New Deal administration of President Franklin Roosevelt, Fred Trump received mortgage guarantees from the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) that allowed him to build thousands of homes in Brooklyn, becoming the borough's biggest builder. During World War II, Fred constructed FHA-backed housing near major East Coast shipyards in Chester, Pennsylvania, and in Norfolk and Newport News, Virginia. He later refused to testify at the hearings held by Republican Homer Earl Capehart, chair of the Senate's Banking and Currency Committee, during which Trump and a host of other developers were accused of pilfering millions of dollars from the war effort.

After the war, Fred Trump returned to building in the outer boroughs, erecting large developments in Brooklyn and Queens with city, state and federal assistance. Trump Village in Coney Island stands as his largest accomplishment and one of the few to which he lent his name. The 61-acre, mostly uninhabited area on which Trump Village was built was originally slated to become a cooperative complex erected by the labor union-backed United Housing Federation (UHF).

But drawing on his close political connections with the Brooklyn Democratic Party machine and the administration of Mayor Robert Wagner, to whom Trump was a top donor, he denounced the UHF plan as an affront to the free-enterprise system and an attempt to use tax abatements in order provide housing to a "privileged few." Fred wrangled 40 of those acres for himself. He then took advantage of the same tax abatements he criticized the UHF for receiving.

All told, Jerome Tuccill notes in *Trump: The Saga of America's Most Powerful Real Estate Baron*, New York State put up 90 percent of the funding to erect Trump Village. An eventual review by the State Investigations Commission after it was complete revealed that Fred exaggerated the costs of construction by renting equipment at inflated prices from a company he owned and by distorting the purchasing price of the property.

Continued on page 8

WHAT'S A FEMINIST TO DO?

BY LINDA MARTÍN ALCOFF

Hillary Rodham Clinton is running hard for president. After 227 years of men filling this position — men who ranged from good to bad to incompetent to criminal — she just might win. So, what's a feminist to do?

Since Clinton entered the national political scene as First Lady in 1992, she has been cast as our unofficial feminist head of state. From the beginning, she established herself as a political operative with a focus on women's issues, and after Bill left office, she followed up with an eight-year term in the U.S. Senate and four-year tenure as Secretary of State. Clinton is the most serious female contender for the presidency in U.S. history, and, unlike Carly Fiorina, at least she's a Democrat.

This summer she made an effort to bolster her reputation as a progressive. She has made substantive statements about race and policing, as well as the need to raise the minimum wage. Yet of course, Clinton's credentials as a social progressive are as fake as a teenager's ID. She helped decimate the paltry U.S. welfare state and stood by while her husband expanded the prison industrial complex. She made use of racist dog whistles in her 2008 campaign against Obama and abandoned the Palestinian people to the Israeli right wing. In the midst of war fever, Clinton voted for the war against Iraq. And she still wants to nail Edward Snowden even while she has been protecting the privacy of her own emails. These issues — from war to welfare to racism to the security state — are women's issues just as much as reproductive rights and gender violence.

One might imagine that the right wing would welcome a Clinton run given this track record. Yet they are in hysterics. And Hillary haters also abound in liberal and left public venues, throwing around mean-spirited caricatures and sexist imagery — Saturday Night Live's regular portrayal of her shouting with bared teeth is a prime example. The male-dominated left seems to think such jokes are fair game given her neoliberal politics.

Clinton's feminist supporters, meanwhile, say that "it's her turn." Despite the inadequacy of her record, they are suggesting that we need to make a priority of integrating the boys club.

A TROUBLED HISTORY

The idea that it is "her" turn, or "our" collective female turn, invokes a troubled history that should give every feminist pause. After the Civil War, when an expansion beyond white male suffrage was on the table, the coalition that had fought against slavery fell into a civil war of its own. At first, abolitionists and supporters of women's rights continued the alliance they had built since 1840 and demanded the vote for all former slaves and all women.

Leading allies, however, balked at this proposal. They included Horace Greeley, editor of the *New York Tribune*, who called women's suffrage too "revolutionary." He held that public sentiment would not support such a "radical" transformation in "social and domestic life." Frederick Douglass also opposed universal suffrage, arguing that until women are "dragged from their houses and hung upon lamp posts" their claim to the ballot did not have the same urgency as that of black men. In the ensuing split, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton put the vote for women first, while Lucy Stone and Henry Blackwell advocated for a staged fight starting with black male suffrage.

In truth, this was not a competition of gender against race, but of white women against black men, with women of color left hanging. Anthony unashamedly began to make explicitly racist, elitist and xenophobic arguments, casting white women over former slaves, workers and new immigrants. She wrote that without female suffrage, "fifteen million white women" will have been "cast under the heel of the lowest orders of manhood."

Today, such a move epitomizes what has come to be called white feminism. As in, Jim Crow feminism, racist feminism. And it's a clear contradiction in terms if feminism is supposed to be for all women.

THE IMPORTANCE OF IDENTITY

How should we think about the intersecting issues of gender alongside race and class in Clinton's candidacy? We seem to have a divide between her feminist supporters, who want gender prioritized, and her progressive detractors, who minimize the gender stakes in her campaign.

While liberals like Maureen Dowd join in the gender policing of Hillary's dress and mannerisms, the left — male and female — castigates the identity politics of her supporters, as if her gender makes no legitimate difference. Laura Flanders said on Melissa Harris-Perry's show that women should not get bamboozled by the playing of gender in this race. Paul Krugman editorialized that the problems facing white women and African-Americans can be summarized in one word: poverty.

They are not totally wrong, of course, but the misuse of identity doesn't mean it has no use whatever. Radicals and liberals make a big mistake to slam gender and race as side issues and the identity of candidates as nothing but a smokescreen. Allow me to differ.

First, Hillary is getting an inexcusable amount of sexism from all sides. She has been called "emotional" (CNN), "feisty" (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*), "cackling" (Bill Maher), not to mention ambitious, maniacal and demonic in spirit. Her face has been put on a tap-dancing doll and sold at airports. Sexism still dominates the public domain of discourse without sufficient response from the left. We need women candidates of all races to reconfigure the social imaginary, including that of the left.

Second, women, even some women of color, identify with Hillary, and this is not just about being duped. She has been cheated on, smeared by innuendo and taunted for the size of her thighs. Her commitment to feminism has earned her some formidable enemies. And still she keeps coming back, speaking out, standing up. It's no wonder that some teenage girl bloggers declare their passion for her campaign.

Third, Hillary's feminism is not actually white feminism, it's corporate feminism. Her track record on economic issues has not helped white women, not to mention African-American women or Latinas. White women's mortality rate is increasing sharply, and no wonder: their median income is \$722 a week, before taxes, meaning that half of them take home less than that. The occupational fields they dominate — educational and health services, wholesale and retail, and leisure and hospitality — remain seriously underpaid. No wonder the 1% has garnered 58 percent of all new income since 2008. Clinton's campaign, meanwhile, is mum on tax increases for the rich, on austerity measures in Europe and on the desperate need to fight for the right to organize workers.

Fourth, both gender and race are central political struggles that cannot be sidelined in a generic approach to economic struggles. The struggle around class has to include an understanding of how poverty, unemployment and exploitation are calibrated via social identities.

COMPETING CLAIMS

Let's return to 1866 for a moment. While Anthony's racism and elitism was exposed in this fight, Douglas's call for black male suffrage on the grounds of the serious violence black men suffered ignored the serious violence in women's lives, across racial communities, from being raped and beaten in their own homes to being raped on the job as the price of employment. Race and gender issues have long been set in competition and put forward in contorted versions that shouldn't brook support for either side. Racist feminism or an anti-racism that ignores gender? No, thank you.

Clinton's political record has followed neatly in this tradition. Her voting record is solidly liberal, which is to say, inadequate. She's voted right on health care, immigration, gun control and reproductive rights while also getting high marks from government contractors and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. She speaks constantly on women's rights but has only supported a weak \$12 minimum wage. Worst of all is her late, politically expedient apology for supporting the Iraq War: When it was safe, and to her advantage, she expressed regret for an imperial war that murdered tens of thousands of people, decimated the U.S. economy and turned the poor into cannon fodder.

I'm voting for Bernie Sanders, the white guy. His economic agenda



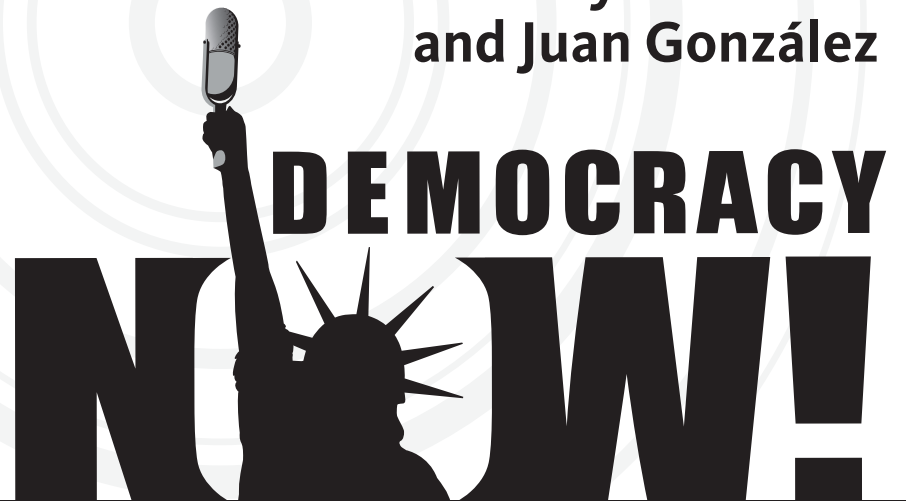


makes him a better candidate for the majority of women than Clinton. And he opposed the war consistently from the beginning. But we have to stop approaching issues such as class as distinct from gender, race, sexuality and other identity-based forms of hierarchy. Sanders is the best candidate not because his “class” agenda trumps all else, but because he offers the most on these interrelated fronts. Meanwhile, as long as the left feels justified in ignoring the sexist comedy parade against women candidates, and dismisses identity issues as so much drizzle obscuring our vision, they deserve to lose ardent teenage girl support. Clinton’s upfront feminism and the sexism she faces daily don’t justify our votes, but they do justify paying serious attention to the multiple and complicated identity issues that beset the political field of play.

Linda Martín Alcoff is a professor of philosophy at the City University of New York. Her latest book, The Future of Whiteness, was just published by Polity Press.

JESSICA PATRICK

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TRUMP

Continued from page 5

The commission estimated Fred skimmed \$1,850,000 off the state in the deal, equivalent to more than \$14 million today when adjusted for inflation. Investigators sent their findings to the Brooklyn district attorney's office, but charges were never filed.

LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON

Donald took over the family business in 1974 at the age of 28, and one of his first orders of business was settling a Department of Justice (DOJ) suit accusing the Trumps of violating the 1969 Fair Housing Act by systematically refusing to rent to African-Americans. Much of the evidence was collected through an Urban League investigation, which found prospective tenants at Trump-owned properties were screened on the basis of race. In court testimony Donald feigned colorblindness, though under cross-examination he conceded that he managed properties that were inhabited entirely by whites. Through court filings and in press releases he alleged that by suing him the DOJ was attempting to force him to rent to welfare recipients. In 1975, Trump settled with the DOJ, agreeing to place ads for Trump apartments in minority-run newspapers.

Charges of racism against Trump surfaced again on the campaign trail this year. Announcing his intention to run for president, Trump complained that lax border enforcement was allowing "rapists" and "murderers" to enter the United States — hence his scheme to erect a massive wall, as well as deport 11 million undocumented individuals and their families. Trump has continued to demonize welfare recipients too, lamenting to Sean Hannity of Fox News that those who receive government assistance "lack an incentive to work." "They make more money by sitting there doing nothing than they make if they have a job," he claimed.

But like his father before him, Donald has made millions off the government by essentially doing nothing.

When the Trump Golf Links in Ferry Point, Bronx, opened in April, the city's Independent Budget Office estimated that \$230 million in public subsidies had been poured into the project. It's unclear exactly what taxpayers get out of the investment, except that Trump will manage the site. He was supposed to build a children's park nearby, though as of July, when the *New York Times* investigated, it did not have bathrooms or much playground equipment beyond a slide. Since 2004, Trump Tower in Midtown has been receiving tax breaks on its commercial real estate that will eventually total \$163.8 million by the time they expire next year, the conservative *National Review* reported in August.

The developer's dependence on government generosity goes back to his earliest Manhattan ventures in the 1970s. By leveraging his father's political connections, this time with Mayor Abraham Beame, Trump secured building rights on rail yards owned by the bankrupt Penn Central Transportation Company along Midtown's western shore from 59th to 72nd Street and to the Hotel Commodore above Grand Central Terminal on 42nd Street. Trump eventually built Trump City (since renamed Riverside South by new owners) on the west side with millions in public subsidies and received a 40-year tax abatement worth \$400 million to transform the Commodore into a Grand Hyatt.

BEYOND THE HYPE

Trump attributes such gifts to his brilliant negotiating style. Yet, despite all the self-generated hype surrounding Trump's acumen as a businessman, the *National Journal* recently suggested that he would be even richer today had he done less. If Trump had put the \$200 million *Forbes* estimated he was worth in 1982 into a mutual fund of S&P 500 stocks, "it would have grown to more than \$8 billion today," the *Journal* reported. Trump's recent statements that he is worth \$10 billion are widely viewed as exaggerations in the financial press. *Forbes* estimates he is worth \$4.1 billion; *Bloomberg*, \$2.9 billion. In recent years Trump ventures have undergone a number of bankruptcies. His primary sources of income appear, based on campaign filings, to be speaking engagements, "Celebrity Apprentice" (though NBC finally fired him this summer after his remarks disparaging Mexican immigrants) and licensing his name to developments nationally and abroad.

In a 2011 deposition over a failed condominium project bearing his name in Florida, lawyers representing clients forced to forfeit their down payments when the project went bust asked Trump if he ever exaggerated the value of his properties. "Not beyond reason," Trump stated.

Likewise, Trump's financial empire is built on his exaggerated image as a success, not on actual success. What he has accomplished is largely thanks to his father's government-gifted wealth and contemporary taxpayer largess. He has further demonstrated a willingness to attack people of color and the poor (for example, the infamous full-page ads he took out in several New York City dailies 1989 calling for the reinstatement of the death

Continued on page 17

INDY



NOVEMBER 2000 — Why is New York becoming unaffordable for working people who've stuck it out in the city through good times and bad? Heather Haddon breaks down the policies that have made New York City ripe for hyper-gentrification at the beginning of the new millennium.

MAY 2001 — Union organizer Stephanie Greenwood takes readers through a grueling campaign to win union recognition for more than 300 overworked and underpaid residents at St. Lukes-Roosevelt Hospital. She writes, "The process of organizing a union has only flashes of idealism and high-road inspiration. ... Each meeting, conversation, trip to a legislative member's office or community board, each letter of support, each day another person wore a union button was another piece of pressure brought to bear on a complicated, financially distraught institution. ...

For [hospital] residents whose overriding problem was a lack of time and energy for out-of-work activity, the piecemeal nature of building a campaign required lots of faith and motivation to keep going. 'How will we get the union? Well, come to a meeting with Community Board 9 and ask for its support. Will that work? No, but it will help.'

SEPTEMBER 2001 — *The Independent* publishes a four-page special issue within 48 hours of the 9/11 attacks and another 12-page special issue a week later. As the Bush administration rushes to exploit public rage and fear following 9/11, the Indy becomes a magnet for New Yorkers who are alarmed by where the country is headed.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO THE INDY

By Nicholas Powers

Can I get this right? I ask the question whenever I touch the keyboard. My fingertips on the letters, I sense the gulf between reality and how it appears on the page. And the effort it takes to cross that distance.

Who enjoys reading about war and the protests against it? Or police brutality? Or the hypnotic effect of media, or how lives are scarred by violence? Sometimes, I want to look away from the keyboard, to say, no, don't think about this, no, don't feel it anymore, no, just use someone else's language. Breathing slowly, I focus on everyone I love and the world they deserve to live in. And then the words move through me like a wave.

For 11 years this has been the rhythm of my life at *The Independent*. Using the body as a sponge to soak in other people's voices and squeezing it out, line by line, on the page. Writing is life making its way to language. In my clumsy hands, it often slipped on rhetoric or got snagged on an image or was trapped inside a shiny idea. After hours of typing, I would re-read the story and find where I betrayed people I knew for the pride I wanted.

Sometimes, I wrote the last word at sunrise. Leaning back in my chair, I looked over the article and saw in it, despite my flaws, the real world we lived in. After emailing it the editors, I'd go the roof and watch the horizon glowing red. And those were the sanest hours of my life. Seeing a city wake up, knowing I had tapped into its truth. I gave voice to people's rage and desperation

15 STEPS

GET THAT FIRST ISSUE OUT THE DOOR

After months of discussions, *The Independent's* original collective managed to eke out a four-page, black-and-white first issue on September 8, 2000, just in time for a series of anti-corporate protests being held in the city that week. With the paper now circulating, a new wave of aspiring volunteers showed up at the next editorial meeting, including individuals who would become deeply involved in the paper for years to come.

HOW TO BUILD A RADICAL NYC NEWSPAPER, IN 15 STEPS

Hard work, an unusual blend of idealism and pragmatism, enough youthful passion to power a small city and a remarkable gift from one of our earliest supporters all helped make it possible for The Independent to survive and thrive as a long-running community institution.

1 SCORE FREE RENT
The earliest planning meetings for *The Independent* were held during the summer of 2000 in the house of various collective members. Just when it seemed like the nascent newspaper would remain homeless, a supporter invited the Indy to set up shop in a 2,000-square-foot commercial loft space near East 29th Street and Park Avenue at no charge.

The 29th Street space came with a meeting area, a bank of computers, a T1 line that offered high-speed Internet at a time when dial-up was the norm, a small kitchen, a shower and enough nooks and crannies for as many as seven volunteers at a time to live on-site, plus room for visitors to crash on the couch. A community media center and a virtual squat all rolled into one, the 29th Street office became a magnet for radical media activists and provided a stable, if chaotic, home during the paper's early years.

Continued on page 16



MARCH 2002 — Six months after 9/11 and long before most people are paying attention, Mike Burke examines an already growing body of evidence about the possible long-term impact on New Yorkers of the collapse of the Twin Towers. “Many experts,” he writes, “including dissident scientists within the Environmental Protection Agency, describe the event as an environmental disaster on a scale unlike any the city has ever seen.”

NOVEMBER 2002

— Four months before the United States invades Iraq, the Indy publishes a special issue titled “Why War? Why Now?” The issue debunks official rationales for war, offers a first-hand glimpse into the lives of ordinary Iraqis, and covers the growing antiwar movement. A two-page center spread highlights dozens of sites in the United States where weapons of mass destruction are developed and produced. It is later reproduced as a glossy, full-color 24-by-36-inch poster. Thousands of copies are sold across the country, financing the growth of the paper.

FEBRUARY-APRIL 2003 — The Indy distributes 25,000 copies of an eight-page special issue at the massive antiwar protest, held February 15 in Midtown, that draws upward of 400,000 people. The Indy collective produces five more issues over the next 10 weeks that focus heavily on the Iraq War and the beginning of the U.S. occupation of Iraq.

NOVEMBER 2003

— “A growing number of landlords are using tenant-screening companies that offer detailed data on prospective renters far beyond routine credit checks,” Steven Wishnia writes in an exposé about intrusive new data gathering practices that punish prospective tenants who have previously used housing court to defend their rights.

JUNE 2004 — Bennett Baumer makes his way into a rigged longshoremen’s union election. “At the Holiday Inn,” he writes, “no third party mediated the voting and locks did not appear on some boxes. I asked [Local 1235 President Al] Cernadas if the voting had ended. Referring to the union members, he said, ‘Oh no, they have until 6 p.m. to vote.’ Putting his arm around me, Cernadas steered me toward the other end of the room from the open ballot box.”

15 STEPS

3 CHANGE YOUR NAME UNTIL IT FEELS RIGHT
The inaugural issue of the paper was published under the name UNst8ed. Dissatisfied with the name, the paper’s staff decided on a new moniker, The Independent. It was derived from the paper’s affiliation with Indymedia, a decentralized global network of grassroots media collectives that had its origins in the Seattle WTO protests of 1999. During the paper’s first year, other name changes — The Brick Through the Window Gazette, The New York Beacon and The Independent, minus the “y” — were debated but rejected.

GETTING THE PAPER STARTED

By Ana Nogueira

The *Independent’s* very first meetings were held during the spring and summer of 2000. There were eight of us who would meet at each other’s houses. We were inspired by the global justice movement, which had erupted in the United States in November 1999 at demonstrations that shut down a summit meeting of the World Trade Organization.

A groundbreaking new website, indymedia.org, had played a key role in the “Battle of Seattle” and again at the April 16, 2000 protests in Washington, D.C., that targeted the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. People around the world were challenging corporate-led globalization.

Being one of the first open publishing sites on the Internet, indymedia.org made it possible for protesters and their supporters to tell their side of the story by uploading articles, photos, audio and video, and thereby directly challenge the corporate media’s version of events. This was a huge breakthrough at the time. During the week of protests in Seattle, indymedia.org received more traffic than CNN’s website. Back at home in New York City, we wanted to create a local version of Indymedia that would serve as an enduring home for independent media activism.

My personal first taste of rage against filtered journalism came during my junior year at SUNY-Purchase, a state college located an hour north of

the city. I enrolled in the school’s new journalism program and became the first editor-in-chief of our student newspaper. We covered controversial issues such as police brutality, rape on campus and protests against the administration’s secret plan to build a huge art gallery in the middle of a student square.

On several occasions the journalism program director stole the final copy of the paper and edited it to put the college in a more positive light. I was outraged. This woman had enjoyed a distinguished career in journalism. She saw me as her protégé at first, and promised me a scholarship to the Columbia School of Journalism and an internship at the *Wall Street Journal*. But when I loudly protested her censorship of critical issues, she told me I was through, because “that’s not how the real world works.”

Shortly after I graduated college in 1999, I got a \$500 grant from the Puffin Foundation to publish a DIY paper. We used that money to print the inaugural issue of *The Independent*, although that first issue was called *The UNst8ed*. It was published in conjunction with protests at the U.N. Millennium Summit, a gathering of world leaders that sought to give a veneer of legitimacy to a number of pro-corporate policies backed by wealthy nations.

Honestly, the first issue looked terrible! Yet, when we handed it out people were very supportive of what we were trying to do. Someone who heard about what we were doing gave us free office space to work out of near 29th Street and Park Avenue, which was a game-changer for the project.

After that first issue circulated, more people came to our meetings to work on the paper as well as start a video team and an internet radio station. The second issue — now called *The Independent* — also got a badly needed makeover!

When 9/11 happened a year later, we had already established a fairly regular publishing schedule. But the events of 9/11 pushed us to a whole new level. It is at times like these, when people are asking critical questions and the cracks in the system are visible, that independent media can make the biggest difference. The impact we made by distributing our post-9/11 special issues at Union Square, where ordinary people were asking extraordinary questions, is what truly ignited the passion for independent reporting that still shines in *The Independent* today. Please keep supporting this steadfast print publication!

A co-founder of The Independent, Ana Nogueira has worked as a video producer at Democracy Now! and directed the documentary film Roadmap to Apartheid. She is currently a core organizer of the Mayday Community Space in Bushwick, Brooklyn.

15 STEPS

4 ESTABLISH STANDARDS
Should basic writing errors be allowed to appear in the paper out of deference to the “authenticity” of the writer’s voice? Or must mistakes be fixed to preserve the overall credibility of the publication? These questions were a source of contentious debate during the paper’s early days before consensus was reached in favor of editing articles for spelling, grammar and punctuation. This impulse to ensure quality writing appeared in the paper would gradually become the norm in the culture of the Indy, enhancing the newspaper’s credibility with readers while making it more attractive to potential volunteers.



SUMMER 2004 — While the corporate media push unsubstantiated scare stories about protesters and terrorists besieging New York during the upcoming Republican National Convention, the Indy trumpets the rights of protesters and reports on the many reasons they are taking to the streets. Two August issues have print runs of 100,000 and 150,000, the largest circulation in decades for a radical, grass-roots newspaper.



DECEMBER 2004

John Tarleton profiles Harold Noel, a Brooklyn-born Iraq War vet who finds himself fighting mental illness and sleeping outside at the onset of winter while his family falls apart around him. Noel's story is subsequently picked up by *Democracy Now!* and retold by CBS, CNN, the *New York Post*, the *Christian Science Monitor* as well as a number of websites. Noel tells *The Independent*, "I walk around crying every day. I feel lost in my own land; the land I fought for. ... Sometimes I just feel like picking up a gun and calling it quits. ... But, something's got to get better. I didn't just risk my life for nothing. There's a God out there — somewhere." A month later, an anonymous donor puts up \$18,500 to cover a year's rent for a three-bedroom apartment in the Bronx for Noel, his wife and three kids.



FEBRUARY 2005 — With the Republicans entrenched in the White House for another four long years, the Indy declares it's "Moving Beyond Bush and Dick" in its first annual sex issue. Featured articles include a look at the working life of a dominatrix, boot fetishes, BDSM and the use of safewords, a how-to guide for making dildos and a first-person piece on fighting back against the police harassment of queers cruising in Central Park's Ramble area.

APRIL 2005

"In devising a strategy to defeat Iraq's insurgents, the Pentagon may be gaining the upper hand at the cost of pushing Iraq toward civil war," *Indypendent* co-founder Arun Gupta writes in a groundbreaking piece. Later that summer, Gupta writes an in-depth analysis detailing how the conflict between Iraq's Sunni and Shi'ite populations has devolved into "civil war," a term most of the U.S. media refuse to use for almost another year and a half.



SEPTEMBER 2005 — The Indy publishes a post-Katrina special issue that looks at the blatant disregard for Black lives in the response of the government and the corporate media as well as the hidden heroics of people coming to each other's aid. "I'm in the Algiers neighborhood of New Orleans, the only part that isn't flooded," writes former New Orleans Black Panther and community organizer Malik Rahim. "The water is good. Our parks and schools could easily hold 40,000 people and they're not using any of it. This is criminal. People are dying for no other reason than the lack of organization."



COVERING 9/11

By Mike Burke

15 STEPS

5 RESPOND BOLDLY TO HISTORIC MOMENTS
The Indy published a special issue within 48 hours of the collapse of the World Trade Center. It published another special issue a week later. The paper subsequently experienced a surge in new volunteers looking for a way to respond to the ugly mood settling over the country. The paper also published special issues with increased press runs around the 2004 Republican National Convention in New York, the rise of the Occupy Movement and during the run-up to last year's People's Climate March, bolstering its reach and visibility on each occasion.

I thought a bomb had gone off. It was 9:59 a.m. I was working in an office building on Nassau Street, blocks away from the burning Twin Towers. Our building shook. My colleagues and I could see a stream of people running on the sidewalk. Then the sky went black. Dust engulfed our building. The South Tower had collapsed, 56 minutes after being struck. Thirty minutes later the sky went black again.

The police soon ordered a full evacuation of lower Manhattan. Along with thousands of other stunned New Yorkers I walked home across the Williamsburg Bridge, occasionally looking back in horror at the plume of smoke hanging over where the World Trade Center had stood just hours before.

By the time I got home, the calls for war had already begun.

Former Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger appeared on CNN saying, "There is only one way to begin to deal with people like this, and that is you have to kill some of them even if they are not immediately directly involved in this thing."

The *New York Post* ran a column titled "Simply Kill the Bastards." Steve Dunleavy wrote, "As for cities or countries that host these worms, bomb them into basketball courts."

I returned to Manhattan the next day, first stopping at a vigil in Union Square and then heading to the NYC Indymedia office, where *The Independent* was housed, for an emergency editorial meeting to begin work on a special issue.

I recently uncovered my notes from that meeting. Some of the topics raised: "civil liber-

ties," "anti-Arab," "what kind of war," "anti-war movement," "airport security," "history of Middle East conflict" and "right-wing nuts."

Within 24 hours the paper was published.

The special issue featured a photograph of downtown Manhattan after the towers collapsed. A box detailing ways to help ran down the left side. The lead article, "After Shocks," described the city in the first 24 hours after the attack, when families were desperately searching for missing loved ones while others held impromptu vigils in Union and Washington Squares.

At the time we still didn't know how many people had died or who was behind the attack.

Other articles in the issue included "Media Goes to War," "We Need Real Security," "Timeline of Lost Liberty" and "Rising Hatred," about the backlash against Arab- and Muslim-American immigrant communities. The back page featured original first-person reports from Ground Zero.

My contribution to our special issue was headlined "How Should We Respond." I interviewed leading peace activists, including Dave McReynolds of the War Resisters League and Carmen Trotta of the Catholic Worker Movement. The article's message was a call for peace. After recounting the cries for revenge, I wrote, "But wouldn't fighting terror with terror propel the nation, and indeed the world into a war where there may be no winners?"

In the months after the September 11 attacks I decided to quit my full-time job in order to focus full time on journalism. I joined the staff at *Democracy Now!* just in time to help produce a special on the first anniversary of the attacks. Today I am still at *Democracy Now!*, still covering many of the same issues we identified in that special issue of *The Independent*.

Mike Burke is a senior producer at *Democracy Now!* and a co-founder of *The Independent*.

15 STEPS

6 YOU TOO CAN BE A REPORTER

News reporting is hard work but it ain't rocket science. Looking to share skills and demystify the process of how reporters do their work, the Indy began holding introductory-level community reporting workshops at its office in November 2001. Participants who wished to put their newly acquired knowledge to use were invited to work on articles for the newspaper or its website. Hundreds of people have participated in these workshops, a number of whom went on to become active in the paper.



NOVEMBER 2005 — The Indy looks at the struggle for justice at the City University of New York with a package of stories that includes a feature on the trials and tribulations of Hostos Community College activist Miguel Malo by Sarah Stuteville and Yvonne Liu's first-

JANUARY 2006 — “You can call it ‘save the world fiction,’ but it clearly doesn’t save anything. It just calls people’s attention to the fact that so much needs to be done,” legendary science fiction writer Octavia Butler told the Indy’s Kazembe Balagun in her last published interview. Butler, 58, the author of 11 science fiction novels, including *Kindred* and *Parable of the Talents*, died from a fall six weeks later.



MARCH 2006 — Photojournalist Andrew Stern spends a month living in Cité Soleil, Haiti, in the run-up to the country’s first elections since former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was toppled in a 2004 U.S.-backed coup. Stern’s photo essay captures the spirit of a sprawling urban slum on the edge of Haiti’s capital city, where repression by and resistance to foreign troops is a part of daily life.

NOVEMBER 2006 — Soon after NYC Indymedia journalist Brad Will is murdered by paramilitaries while covering anti-government protests in the southern Mexican state of Oaxaca, *The Independent* comes out with a special issue on the life and death of the legendary activist.

I had done some coverage of protests and other events, but this was the first time I was on my own. The complexity of the story was also a maturing moment for me as a journalist and activist. It was abhorrent to recruit kids, especially from a poor, predominantly people-of-color neighborhood like Bed-Stuy, who might someday fight in the Iraq War. But some adults saw it as a valuable after-school program that instilled self-discipline and respect for authority in the kids. It made me begin to understand and explore nuance in issues.

At the time I was shy and socially awkward. Journalism provided me a way of forgetting my self-consciousness. That article also taught me that people are eager to share their thoughts and stories. Here I was, a young white girl from the West Coast, wandering into a church in Bed-Stuy and asking about the youth program, and people were glad to talk to me.

When the story came out, I received lots of emails and comments about it, which was a first for me. I won some awards for the story and started thinking, “I can do this.” It felt like something I wanted to do for the rest of my life.

Sarah Stuteville is the co-founder and creative director of the Seattle Globalist, a daily online publication that covers the connections between local and global issues in Seattle and offers youth training programs for the next generation of media makers. She is also a columnist for the Seattle Times and teaches journalism at the University of Washington, where she won the 2015 Educator of the Year award from the Society of Professional Journalists Northwest.



NOVEMBER 2007 — When the House of Representatives approves the Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism Act by a vote of 400-6, it seems a sure bet that the measure will sail through the Senate and be signed by President George W. Bush. However, when Jessica Lee’s reporting reveals how the legislation could be used by the government to target people engaged in First Amendment-protected activity and traditional forms of protest, a firestorm of criticism ensues from activists and civil libertarians across the political spectrum. The legislation subsequently dies in the Senate. Lee would later win a Project Censored award for writing one of the 10 most important under-reported domestic news stories of that year.



FEBRUARY 2008 — With the future of Harlem’s famed 125th Street Corridor up for grabs, Renée Feltz looks at the battle between community activists and black-owned small businesses on one side and proponents of turning the neighborhood into an entertainment destination on the other. “If the only black presence in Harlem is a memory in the form of museums and place names, to hell with that,” says historian Michael Henry Adams.



APRIL 2008 — Using the story of a dementia-afflicted, 86-year-old homeowner in Crown Heights as a starting point, Joseph Huff-Hannon does a deep dive into the predatory practices of sub-prime mortgage lenders in neighborhoods like Crown Heights and Bed-Stuy. “If the housing market falls precipitously here as it has across much of the nation,” Huff-Hannon warns, “a cascade of foreclosures is likely to follow. An alarming number of those losing their homes will likely be black seniors.”



OCTOBER 2008 — Read it and weep! Arun Gupta, illustrator Frank Reynoso and four others team up to create “How to Wreck the Economy,” an illustrated, step-by-step guide that explains the financial products and processes that Wall Street used to blow up the global economy and set the Great Recession in motion.

MARCH 2009 — Sarah Secunda captures the zeitgeist of the Great Recession in her coverage of striking immigrant workers at the Stella D’oro bakery in the Bronx who find themselves locked in a bitter labor battle against a private equity company demanding deep cuts in pay and benefits.



OCTOBER 2009 — Jessica Lee drills down into the science of the controversial drilling practice known as fracking. Her reporting also highlights grassroots groups that will carry out a multi-year battle that ultimately leads to a ban of fracking in New York State.

15 STEPS 7 BECOME A HOOKUP HOTSPOT

Lefties need good lovin’ just like everyone else. Before dating apps and websites like OkCupid became ubiquitous, The Independent was practically its own meet-up site, with volunteers frequently hooking up and in some cases settling into long-term relationships while continuing to work on the paper. After all, what on the left signals smart, sexy and passionately committed more than someone doing their part to contribute to a scrappy underdog newspaper that’s out to save the world?

‘I HAD ZERO EXPERIENCE’

By Sarah Stuteville

The first time I saw *The Independent* was at an activist meeting at Hunter College. I was going to school and working as a waitress and a temp and thinking about how I could break into journalism.

I was enrolled in a media studies program at CUNY-Hunter College. I decided I would write for the Indy as much as I could and learn how it’s done. I had zero experience, yet the editors at the Indy made me feel like I was a reporter, and I wanted to rise to the high standards set for me. When I later wrote for other publications, I realized they are not always there to walk you through a story, brainstorm potential sources or do four edits of an article.

A story I did in the spring of 2004 about a Junior ROTC recruiting program in Bedford-Stuyvesant really marked the beginning of my identity as a journalist. I was walking to the subway one day when I saw a bunch of little kids walking through the streets in fatigues with air rifles. I asked around and got directions to the church where they were located. I spoke with the kids and the founder of the program. It was a light-bulb moment in which I learned that journalism was an opportunity to live curiously all the time.

15 STEPS 8 CREATE A BIG TENT

The New York City left is populated by a wide array of groups — anarchists, socialists, communists, Greens, left-liberal Democrats, labor unions, grassroots community-based organizations and others — that are prone to remaining in their own silos, or worse, falling into internecine disputes. Each group is doing important work. So instead of narrowly focusing on any one of these groups or adopting a particular “party line,” we have sought to be an ecumenical big tent where a wide array of social justice issues and activism is covered, analyzed and debated from within a left framework.

CREATING SPACE FOR ARTISTS

By Frank Reynoso

Having artists do original illustrations to accompany articles has been key to the look of *The Independent*. We currently have a roster of 70 volunteer illustrators who I stay in touch with via an email list. It wasn’t always that way.

In late 2003 I was volunteering at an anarchist bookstore and always looked forward to reading the new issue of the Indy. I wanted to get involved somehow — and the one thing I could do well was draw. At the first meeting I went to, I got an assignment to illustrate an article about unionized truck drivers fighting company demands for concessions.

I was a nervous wreck when I got home that night. I didn’t know what the hell to do. I drew a bunch of sketches that night and took them back the next day. I gave them to the designer, Ryan Dunsmuir, expecting her to reject me. She pointed at one and said, “We’ll use that.” I drew several versions of the sketch and then sent one in.

I was pleasantly surprised when I saw my illustration on the cover. My roommate at the time thought it was really cool and wanted to draw for the Indy too. I said, “Yeah, come on, let’s do it.”

Then I started hearing from other people who also wanted to draw for

15 STEPS 9 BUILD A DISTRIBUTION NETWORK

It is one thing to publish a newspaper. It is another to get it into people’s hands. Thanks to the efforts of volunteers and supporters who explored their neighborhoods and found bookstores, laundromats, libraries and other public venues to put out the paper, we were able to gradually stitch together a citywide distribution network. These days distribution also happens digitally via independent.org, our social media platforms and our electronic newsletter.

15 STEPS 10

THINK LOCALLY AND GLOBALLY

New York City is our home and we love to hit the pavement covering social justice movements that are fighting to make it a fairer, more humane place to live. At the same time, we live in a big, interconnected world and we want to help our readers better understand it and learn from the experiences of others. The sum of these efforts has created a newspaper that, in the words of Naomi Klein, “reports on the whole world as a collection of neighborhoods, all struggling for justice.”



JUNE 2010 — How does an apolitical family of four on New York's Upper East Side go from apathy to being avid readers of Noam Chomsky and committed activists in the Palestinian solidarity movement? Alex Kane tells the story.



SEPTEMBER 2010 — Wealthy backers of corporate-style "school reform" have dominated the debate on public education for the past decade. But in a special back-to-school issue of the Indy, we hear from activist parents, teachers, students and radical education scholars on issues such as the overreliance on standardized testing, the importance of teachers unions and the misuse of "gifted and talented" programs to maintain a system of de facto segregation in New York City's public schools.



JANUARY 2011 — Nicholas Powers pens the first work of fiction to be published in the Indy. In it, he vividly depicts the rise of a movement that spurs thousands of disillusioned Obama supporters to converge on Wall Street and confront the system that stole their future. Nine months later, life imitates art.



MAY/JUNE 2011 — The Indy provides front-page coverage of a 20,000-person march through the financial district protesting proposed budget cuts by Mayor Bloomberg. Some of the protesters go on to set up a little-noticed protest encampment on the sidewalk across from City Hall. Known as "Bloombergville," the 24/7 protest lasts three weeks. "Organized through a general assembly that met each night at 8 p.m., Bloombergville also served as the movement's living room. People could drop in and share donated food and drink, debate politics for hours, take out books from the 'Bloombergville Library,'" writes John Tarleton, adding, "Bloombergville marked the arrival of an innovative protest tactic in New York that will likely be refined and used again in the future."



FALL 2011 — The Indy publishes three special issues during Occupy Wall Street and its immediate aftermath. Coverage ranges from photo essays and first-person pieces to analysis of the relationship between Occupy and labor unions, the police and the 99% and why taking over public squares in major global cities is such a powerful tactic.

15 STEPS

11

CONTEXT MATTERS

Mainstream journalism often amounts to a collection of seemingly unrelated facts. But that's not enough. We have always strived to have our work informed by history, political context and a critical understanding of capitalism, colonialism, racism and patriarchy, the interlocking systems of social domination that shape and influence nearly every aspect of our lives. By taking this approach, we have become a unique voice in the New York City media landscape that our readers trust to provide a deeper understanding of the news.

A PHOTOJOURNALIST FINDS HER CALLING

By Antrim Caskey

I came to *The Independent* during the 2004 Republican National Convention held here in New York. I had picked up a copy of the paper that showed all the upcoming protests and related events and thought, "Oh, this is just what I've been looking for."

I had been the assistant to the art director at the *New York Times Sunday Magazine*, where I helped coordinate between the production and the editorial departments. It was a dues-paying job, and I got pretty bored and restless. I wanted to be out shooting photo assignments. So I decided to go freelance.

When I attended my first meeting at the Indy, I found a thriving hive of production. I tried to find a place to fit in and eventually became photo team director. There was professionalism and you were allowed to do your thing, and you did it.

I thought it was impressive that people stayed up all night working together to finish the paper. There was a refrigerator that was always stuffed with all sorts of good food that people shared. It was the first time I came into contact with dumpster diving.

At the beginning of my time at the Indy, I did one of the reporting workshops the paper regularly puts on. From that, I found I could do reporting that would complement my photography. The Indy was a wonderful venue to publish in.

I did cover shoots of tenants fighting to stay in their homes, atomic bomb survivors visiting the United Nations and dockworkers in New Jersey fighting to regain control of their union from the Mob.

One night when I was hanging out at the office after a meeting, a personal turning point came. Someone called out from the front room, "Hey, there's someone from West Virginia here!" I was introduced to Maria Gunnoe, a native West Virginian who, earlier that day,

had been kicked out of a shareholder meeting of one of the coal companies that was engaged in an especially destructive mining practice known as mountaintop removal.

An Indy reporter was already working on an article about young activists who were planning to spend the summer in that state supporting locals who were trying to stop coal companies from engaging in mountaintop removal. When Maria described the destruction being visited on her hometown of Bob White, West Virginia, and many others like it, my jaw dropped to the ground. It was a 45-minute monologue. She never blinked and neither did I. Three days later I drove to West Virginia and began photographing. I would be there for the next 10 years.

I lived in a cabin at the end of a road. I was chopping my own firewood and was arrested several times for trespassing on coal company property when I was out doing my work. In addition to the Indy, my photos appeared in *Clamor*, *The Smithsonian*, *Nature*, the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times*. In 2010, I published *Dragline*, a 76-page photo book with all my best work from West Virginia. That won the Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Prize for Domestic Photography. It was pretty neat when I got the call from Ethel Kennedy.

There's been a huge step forward in awareness about mountaintop removal in the past 10 years. And there's a lot of talk in the air about climate change and renewables. Now it's a matter of people wrapping their heads around it all and making the change.

15 STEPS

12

GIVE PEOPLE HOPE

To critique the injustices of the world is deeply ingrained in the mindset of the left. We know how to do that too. But people are constantly organizing and fighting for their rights, building community and transforming our city and world for the better in ways large and small. That's worth covering too.



JULY 2012 — Alina Mogilyanskaya looks at the impact of reduced local and federal funding on the city's Summer Youth Employment Program. The program employs 29,000 youths during the summer while turning down 100,000

more applicants. "The fact that it's a program that is even on the chopping block to me doesn't make sense because it's a wise investment and the returns are so much more for us as a society," City Councilmember and future Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito tells the Indy.



DECEMBER 2012 —

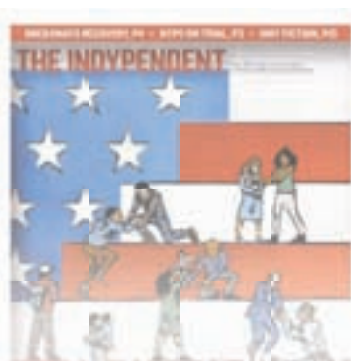
Laura Gottesdiener writes about relief and recovery efforts in Far Rockaway, a community that suffered from decades of government neglect before being battered by Hurricane Sandy. The story looks in part at the evolving relationship between local residents and members of Occupy Sandy.



JANUARY 2013 — As Barack Obama begins his second term as president, the Indy appoints a Shadow Cabinet of visionary thinkers and doers. Each Shadow Cabinet member writes a short essay about what she or he would do upon taking office. Shadow Cabinet appointees include Secretary of State Laura Flanders, Attorney General Michael Ratner and Secretary of Energy Bill McKibben, who titles his article "One Thing Before I'm Fired."

APRIL 2013 — Roberto

Meneses, a Queens day laborer, authors a first-person piece that explains why he will continue to work in the shadows rather than participate in a punitive version of immigration reform being crafted in Congress. "After almost two decades in this country," he writes, "there are a couple of things I have learned: Firstly, don't trust the politicians, and secondly, it will only be through our own ability to organize and collectively fight for our rights that we will see improvements in our lives."



SUMMER/FALL 2013 — On the heels of a media campaign to vilify NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden, the Indy publishes a series of informative, full-color posters in its center spread for four consecutive issues. The posters, drawn by artist Catherine Byun, celebrate Snowden and his fellow whistleblowers Chelsea Manning, Jesselyn Radack and John Kiriakou.



LEARNING TO THINK LIKE A JOURNALIST

By Jaisal Noor

I worked as a production assistant at *Democracy Now!* after I graduated college in 2007. Being in that environment gave me ideas for all kinds of stories I wanted to tell but didn't know how to. Some people at *DN!* asked me if I had heard of *The Independent* and told me it was a place where I could volunteer, be involved in the news process and do on-the-ground reporting.

Attending the Indy's editorial meetings was valuable for me as a young journalist. Listening to experienced people discuss and debate the issues of the day — such as whether Obama was actually going to be a heroic force for change — helped me think about how to gauge a breaking story, what the progressive response can be and how to put events in historical context.

Every young journalist wants to find an under-reported story they can jump on and make their contribution with. For me it was Mayor Michael Bloomberg's attack on New York City's public schools. The Indy had been doing critical coverage of this issue for years, as had *Democracy Now!* and Juan González of the *New York Daily News*. But that was about it, and on many of the big issues — the spread of privately-managed charter schools, the expansion of standardized testing, the de facto segregation of the city's schools and demands for greater community control — there were still many stories to be told.

At that time I had a position with the New-York Historical Society teaching a history class at various schools. One day I would teach at a school on the Upper West Side, in one of the wealthiest zip codes in the country. The next day I would be a half-mile away at a school in Harlem, where the kids lived in crumbling New York City Housing Authority buildings and there were two charter schools moving into the public school

and taking over the gym and the art rooms. I could see firsthand the impact of Bloomberg's policies. Conversations I had with teachers further deepened my understanding of what was happening.

My coverage for the Indy of the impact of Bloomberg's school closings led to my first video reports for The Real News Network, where I got my foot in the door. The connections I made covering public education in New York made it easier for me to hit the ground running when I covered protests in Chicago against school closings orchestrated by Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the 2012 Chicago teachers strike.

I moved to Baltimore a couple of years ago to work full time for Real News. We post four to five stories a day that are disseminated via social media and YouTube. We will be going to a daily national newscast later this fall. In the past year, I've reported from Ferguson and Greece, as well as on the uprising against police violence here in Baltimore. As a senior producer, I review everything that goes up on the website and write the headlines, a skill I spent many hours honing at the Indy. My prior experience at the Indy and elsewhere also enriches the contributions I make at our staff's editorial meetings, where we discuss what stories to go forward with and the angles we want to develop. Once you have learned the basics of good journalism, those skills can be used over and over again in many different situations.

15 STEPS 13

HAVE RADICAL POLITICS AND BE BUSINESS SAVVY TOO

The first issue of the paper was paid for by a \$500 grant from the Puffin Foundation. Since then, we have had to work hard for every dollar with subscriptions, selling ads to social justice oriented organizations, peddling politically-themed posters, holding year-end fund drives, hosting dance parties and more. Most groups on the left struggle with raising the funds to survive, but done right, the solutions you develop can strengthen your organization, reaffirm its core ideals and make it more resilient for the long haul.

15 STEPS 14

AESTHETICS MATTER

With intellectual critique wired into its DNA, the left tends to focus on having the right ideas and the proper words to express them. How those ideas are conveyed visually tends to be an afterthought. Bad idea! The Indy has had the good fortune to be a magnet for talented visual artists. Having the resources to run a full-color front page by our fourth year drew more artists to the paper, which created a virtuous circle that continues to this day.



APRIL 2014 — Amid right-wing protests demanding the fall of Venezuela’s socialist government, Ewan Robertson provides an in-depth report from one affected city. In his reporting, he chronicles the violent tactics of government opponents, their destabilizing impact on daily life and the steady loss of public support for anti-Chavista forces.

SEPTEMBER 2014 — The Indy publishes a 24-page climate change special issue in advance of the People’s Climate March, the largest climate change-related demonstration in history. With the help of scores of volunteers, 60,000 copies of the special issue are distributed around the city.

DECEMBER 2014 — After protests erupt across the nation in response to the non-indictments of police officers who killed Michael Brown and Eric Garner, Nicholas Powers writes in the Indy, “Cops who kill unarmed Black men go free, one after the other. It’s why we march through the streets yelling, ‘Hands up, don’t shoot.’ It’s why we shout the names of our dead. We show our hands because we’re scared of being killed by officers who have been given license to kill Black people and go unpunished. I’m asking you to take this weight from us. I’m asking you to hold your hands up too.”

JANUARY 2015 — When much of the NYPD refuses to ticket people for minor offenses to register its distaste for Mayor Bill de Blasio, nothing happens. No crime wave, no barbarians crashing the gates. It prompts Aaron Miguel Cantú to explore why the city is so heavily policed the rest of the time. His conclusion: “By aggressively controlling the behavior of poor and politically weak people and by helping clear space for developers to build and wealthier new citizens (with more tax revenue) to move in, the NYPD has done what the police have always been designed to do: enforce the will of the rich by suppressing poor dark people.”

AUGUST 2015 — The battle for the soul of New York unfolds in Peter Rugh’s coverage of attempts to turn the Brooklyn Heights public library into luxury condos and the heated resistance the proposed sale has generated. “We used to fight about getting enough funds to build and expand our libraries,” says one advocate. “Now we’re fighting about not getting enough money so that we don’t have to sell off and shrink our libraries.”

Continued from page 9

out, people typed away and the smell of coffee, long nights and stale food wafted through the place. I loved it.

It was more than a newspaper, it was a giant magnet pulling us together. At the editorial meetings, we pitched stories. Some spoke with halting caution, some with hot rage, some with aloof arrogance. Every idea illuminated our sacred dream of a just world. Afterward, we gossiped in the hallways, then went out, reported, researched, wrote and sent back the pieces to the editors, who put it together like a puzzle. When the paper came off the presses, we handed it out on subways and street corners, thousands and thousands of copies like revolutionary pollen blowing through the city.

After giving out papers, I stared at the crowds pouring in and out of the subway, buying magazines or gazing at billboards, and wondered, how could our small paper change anything? But in the oddest, most random moments, I’d see a New Yorker, holding a copy on a bench in the park or on the subway or tucked into their purse.

Sometimes, I’d hold an issue of *The Independent* to a billboard showing a sleek, sexy model, lips pouting as he or she posed on a faraway beach. How we are going to get people’s eyes away from that? Do we need to meet people where they are? Dumb it down?

Frustrated, I’d say at the editorial meetings that we should start a beefcake calendar, get all the men to stand

naked holding a well-positioned copy of the paper. Or fuck it, let’s just publish porn but with dialogue of leftist analysis. People laughed or rolled their eyes and then we went back to publishing the paper we knew how to write. It was sober, serious and militant, but not dogmatic, and very earnest.

The sincerity of our paper is easy to mock. I do all the time. But when I see strangers reading it, nodding as they make their way through a story, a pensive, thoughtful expression on their faces, I know why we survive. Our belief that a better world is possible makes our critique of this one, even at its harshest, a hopeful one. They see what we see. The sacred vision that pulls us back to the keyboard like a magnet.

A few weeks ago, I came to our office in The Brooklyn Commons and looked at the dozens of Indy covers on the walls. It looked like a diary of the New York Left. We had covered the movements, the elections, the disasters, the big ideas, the many stepped-on people and the few powerful faces looming over the city skyline. Here was our vision, growing through the cracks of the city. Here was a fresh stack of papers, ready to blow through New York like pollen.

Nicholas Powers is the author of *The Ground Below Zero: 9/11 to Burning Man, New Orleans to Darfur, Haiti to Occupy Wall Street* (UpSet Press, 2013).

15 STEPS

BECOME LONG-DISTANCE RUNNERS

The *Indy* was born in a milieu of free-wheeling anarchy. Like many activist projects that begin with a burst of volunteer enthusiasm but then fade away fairly quickly, we had minimal resources and infrastructure. To avoid that fate and continue with our work, we got organized, creating some paid staff positions and a budget, streamlining our decision-making processes and obtaining legal nonprofit status.

The challenge now is finding the optimal balance between being structured and being open to the new and the unexpected; between having elements of hierarchy that serve a useful purpose and elements of consensus-based decision-making. There is no right or final answer to these challenges, only the path forward, making the road as we walk.

AND NOW, THE NEXT STEP:

HELP BUILD THE INDY

We’re kicking off our 15th anniversary fund drive this issue. To lock in a vibrant future, we’re asking everyone who enjoys reading this newspaper to become a sustaining member of *The Independent*.

Go to indypendent.org/donate and sign up to make an automatic contribution each month. Or, you can combine your giving for the year into one larger gift at indypendent.org/donate or by sending a check or money order to our mailing address listed below.

Our goal is to reach \$5,000 a month in new memberships. To achieve this, we need the equivalent of 500 readers signing up to give an average of \$10 per month, or .33 cents per day. If you give today, we will be that much closer to our goal.

WILL YOU HELP US NOW?

■ \$3 PER MONTH/\$25 ONE-TIME

■ \$5 PER MONTH/\$50 ONE-TIME

■ \$10 PER MONTH/\$100 ONE-TIME MEMBERS AT THIS LEVEL WILL RECEIVE A ONE-YEAR SUBSCRIPTION FOR THEMSELVES OR A FRIEND.

■ \$15 PER MONTH/\$150 ONE-TIME MEMBERS AT THIS LEVEL WILL RECEIVE A SIGNED COPY OF THE OCCUPIERS: THE MAKING OF THE 99% MOVEMENT BY MICHAEL GOULD-WARTOFSKY, or A SIGNED COPY OF THE FUTURE OF WHITENESS BY LINDA MARTÍN ALCOFF.

■ \$25 PER MONTH/\$250 ONE-TIME MEMBERS AT THIS LEVEL WILL RECEIVE A ONE-YEAR SUBSCRIPTION plus A SIGNED COPY OF THE OCCUPIERS or THE FUTURE OF WHITENESS.

■ \$50 PER MONTH/\$500 ONE-TIME MEMBERS AT THIS LEVEL WILL RECEIVE A ONE-YEAR SUBSCRIPTION plus SIGNED COPIES OF THE OCCUPIERS AND THE FUTURE OF WHITENESS.

NAME
ADDRESS
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CREDIT CARD #
EXP. DATE CSC

MAILING ADDRESS:
THE INDYPENDENT
388 ATLANTIC AVENUE, 2ND FLOOR
BROOKLYN, NY 11217

RATS!

Continued from page 3

look legal. If the market won't bear higher rents, the landlord can charge a lower "preferential rent," and then whack the tenant with a bigger increase when the market goes up.

The southwestern portion of the Bronx is one of the city's lowest-rent neighborhoods, but that might very well change in the near future. Mayor Bill de Blasio's administration is planning to rezone the Jerome Avenue area, as part of its strategy to stimulate affordable-housing construction by allowing luxury high-rises in working-poor neighborhoods with good subway access and then mandating that some of the units built rent for lower rates. Meanwhile, Yankee Stadium is a few blocks away, and the Grand Concourse, a boulevard dubbed "the Champs-Élysées of the Bronx" in the 1930s, would be ripe for gentrification if the neighborhood is deemed "hot."

"We don't hate landlords. We just want them to follow the rules," says Emmanuel Yusuf, 71, a retired photographer originally from Nigeria who's lived in the building for

18 years. Shree Ganesh Bronx tried to raise his rent from \$746 to \$1,100, he says, putting an addendum on his lease that said the building is no longer rent-stabilized. So far, he's refused to pay.

Dorcas Anponsah, a Ghanaian immigrant, said she hasn't signed her lease yet because of the increase. But Aristides Guzman, who lives with his 84-year-old mother, said he felt he had no choice when their rent was raised from \$779 to \$1,000: "You have to pay the rent."

For many of the tenants, those rent increases are the last straw piled on top of years of bad maintenance and reduced amenities. "They put the garbage close to the building and the kids don't have a place to play," says Guzman. "They're not taking care. They only want the money. You come here at night, you can see a thousand rats."

A group walks around the building, pointing out the wide-open side doors, the holes in the fence, the rat holes in the backyard and the parking lot once reserved for residents. It's since been sold to a private owner who rents the spaces to Yankees fans. They say the fans often take advantage of the open doors to piss out the stadium's \$6 beers in the stairwells after games.

"The elevators are out every week. People are getting stuck," says Marjorie King. And with the video security broken on her side of the building, "I don't know who's ringing my buzzer. People have to call me out the window to get in."

Tenants say there has been at least one rape in the building in the last few years, but a Police Department spokesperson said there are no reports of any in the last five years.

The basement community rooms, formerly used for meetings, an after-school program for children and parties, are no longer available, says Emmanuel Yusuf. They and the storage rooms have been converted to apartments, tenants say.

Dorcas Anponsah says the landlord wanted to charge \$25 to fix her leaking "closet" — Anglo-African for "toilet." Jacqueline Yeboah says hers has needed repairs for years. "They have no respect for us. No dignity," she says.

"This building used to be something," says Abigail Diaz. "Now ... we've got to get it back to what it was."

An earlier version of this article appeared on Gothamist.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Continued from page 4

there is rising discontent among many parents with their leadership that could threaten de Blasio's attempt to retain mayoral control. Why?

Smaller classes are New York City parents' top priority for their children's schools. This has been the case every year since 2007, when the Department of Education parent survey was first conducted — that is, until last year, when the question was deleted. Yet class sizes are far too large — and in the early grades are larger than at any time in the last 15 years. More than 350,000 students were in classes of 30 or more students last year. The chancellor has dismissed concerns about class size in many town hall meetings and in testimony before the City Council. A letter sent by 73 professors of education and psychology last fall, emphasizing the importance of smaller classes to improve the quality of education and urging her to reduce class size, went unanswered.

Even in the 94 Renewal schools, Fariña has so far refused to reduce class size, and more than half had sizes of 30 or more students last year.

MISUSED FUNDS

The administration is spending an estimated \$1.6 million per Renewal school that could have been used to hire an additional 25 teachers in each to reduce class size. Instead, the funds are being used to lengthen the school day and add wraparound services, including counseling, medical care and other unspecified "customized supports" while creating new levels of bureaucracy to oversee these schools and crunch data. Many of the students in these schools are English language learners and students with special needs, years behind grade level. Without reducing class size to more appropriate levels, no amount of data analysis, longer hours or wraparound services can provide these students with the personalized instruction and feedback they need to succeed.

The space crunch in our schools continues unabated, with nearly half a million students attending severely overcrowded schools. The rapid expansion of pre-K has made a serious problem worse, and last year, we found that more than 11,800 pre-K seats were located in 254 schools that were above 100 percent utilization, according to DOE figures. The capital plan for school construction is already vastly underfunded, and though the administration claims to be removing the trailers that currently house thousands of students, the plan does not allocate a single dollar to replace their seats. In fact, trailers were still being added to schools in Queens this fall.

The mayor's plan to build 200,000 affordable housing units and an additional 160,000 market-rate units over the next 10 years will create the need for even more school seats. Yet he has developed no plan to ensure that the schools in these neighborhoods will not become even more overcrowded. Many parent leaders, along with Public Advocate Letitia James and 22 members of the City Council, sent a letter to the

chancellor and the mayor in June, urging them to create a commission to improve school planning and to double the seats in the capital plan. So far, neither the chancellor nor the mayor has responded.

Yet parents are not willing to sit back and have their concerns ignored — whether on class size, school overcrowding or student privacy. The widespread protests that caused the state to change the law on student privacy in 2014 and the growing opt-out movement that led to 20 percent of the students opting out of state exams last year show that if sufficiently provoked, parents will fight to ensure that their children receive the education they deserve. Parent resistance will continue to grow until policymakers hear our voices, and start focusing on what really makes a real difference in the learning conditions of our children.

Leonie Haimson is the executive director of Class Size Matters.

TRUMP

Continued from page 8

penalty following the erroneous arrest of five black youths in the Central Park jogger rape case) in order to gain a leg up, cultivating a base of supporters among whites who feel threatened by the shifting racial composition of America.

I asked Wayne Barrett if he thinks Trump would be doing as well as if he were better vetted. He was doubtful. "A lot of support for him is not fact-based at all, so I don't know what facts would change [Trump supporters'] minds," he said.

Perhaps the most revealing portrait of the man emerges in

an interview Trump gave filmmaker Errol Morris in 1998.

"[A]t the end of all that accumulation you see what happens and it's not necessarily all positive," Trump tells the documentarian in a scene available on YouTube. In it, Trump reviews the classic film *Citizen Kane*. "In real life I believe that wealth does in fact isolate you from other people." The genius of *Citizen Kane*, Trump said, is that it brings a "rather sad, lonely figure back into his childhood."

According to a recent biography by Michael D'Antonio, *Never Enough: Donald Trump and the Pursuit of Success*, which is based on extensive interviews with the candidate, his family and his associates, Fred Trump raised his son "to be a killer" and repeatedly whispered in his ear, "You are a

king." Trump told D'Antonio that he considers himself "basically the same" person now as he was when he was in the first grade.

While most political professionals think it's unlikely Trump will be moving into the White House in January 2017, few expected the loud-mouthed reality TV star to get as far as he has. Should he somehow prevail, under King, I mean president, Donald, the American people will likely desire a re-vote as much as Charles Foster Kane longed for his Rosebud.

CONFRONTING THE GHETTO, FROM THE BLACK PANTHERS TO HIP-HOP

Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution
DIRECTED BY STANLEY NELSON (2015)

Straight Outta Compton
DIRECTED BY F. GARY GREY (2015)

By Matt Wasserman

Cops slam every young Black male on the block against the hoods of the cars lining the street. Cuffs are slapped on them as the police pat them down, looking for guns and drugs. If they ask why they've been stopped, they only invite further violence and possible arrest. It's a scene set in 1988-era Compton, California, but it could have just as easily been shot in 1965 Oakland — or 2015 New York. Recent incidents from Staten Island to North Charleston have made it abundantly clear that police brutality did not end with the March on Washington or the integration of police forces.

Hot on the heels of the emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement come two films about how previous generations of African-Americans in the North reacted to endemic poverty and police harassment, *Straight Outta Compton* and *Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution*.

On one level, the two movies could not be more different. The N.W.A biopic is a confection tailor-made for the multiplex, larded with conspicuous consumption and naked women, careening from one set piece giving a capsule history of West Coast rap to another. The documentary about the Black Panther Party is geared to an art house crowd, filled with substantive interviews of former party members and playing in a few select cinemas.

But the similarities abound. Both films are propelled by the sounds of their time: West Coast gangsta rap for *Straight Outta Compton* and soul and funk hits for *Black Panthers*. Both films compress an entire era into a short overview, inevitably giving short shrift to key players. And their subjects even shared a sartorial sense: the Black Panthers' black berets and leather jackets were echoed in the black T-shirts, jackets and (L.A.) Raiders caps donned by their SoCal successors.

It is no coincidence that the Black Panthers and N.W.A (short for Niggaz Wit Attitudes) both came out of California, exposing the state-sanctioned violence and desperate deprivation that was the dark underbelly of Ronald Reagan's saccharine promises of "Morning in America." In the words of criminologist Jonathan Simon, "California is to [mass] incarceration what Mississippi was to segregation — the state that most exemplifies the social and legal deformities of the practice."

The Black Panthers and N.W.A were united not only by their shared experiences of oppression in the ghettos of California, but also by their shrewd instincts for spectacle. Both groups acquired national

profiles through the strategic cultivation of controversy and confrontation with reactionary white lawmakers. The Panthers, initially conceived of as a cop-watching group, captured public attention after taking advantage of California's open-carry laws to show up at the statehouse packing machine guns. They were opposing, in their incendiary style, the efforts of then-Governor Reagan and his allies to take away their guns. N.W.A, meanwhile,

went out of their way to provoke law enforcement and white politicians pandering to the "silent majority" by decrying gangsta rap. The most electrifying moment of *Straight Outta Compton* is when N.W.A defies the order of the Detroit police not to play "Fuck tha Police" in concert, helping incite a riot — and getting arrested in the aftermath. Defiance of the state's claim to a monopoly on legitimate violence may never have looked more fun.

Straight Outta Compton is a study in what happens to the rage born of racial oppression and relative deprivation in the absence of politics. It is the failure of groups like the Panthers and the curdling of hope for systemic change that created the conditions of possibility for N.W.A. The members of N.W.A were occasionally thrust into an ill-fitting position as ghetto spokesmen and advanced a social critique in some songs. However, their focus was not on protest — let alone collective uplift — but on getting ahead. In *Straight Outta Compton*, pervasive police harassment mostly serves as a backdrop justifying the bragadocio and claims of N.W.A to be documenting the reality of their day-to-day lives in their rhymes. When the people of Los Angeles acted out the rage against police brutality that N.W.A gave voice to in their songs, far from joining in or providing leadership, the movie shows the rappers driving through the Rodney King riots on the way to their new suburban mansions. And unlike the Panthers, who largely backed off their initial macho posturing and elevated women to leadership positions, *Straight Outta Compton* — whose producers included Ice Cube and Dr. Dre, two of N.W.A's original crew — has no seeming compunction about glamorizing unbridled misogyny.

While the Black Panthers cannot be accused of lacking politics, the same cannot be said of director Stanley Nelson's documentary. Viewers without a prior steeping in the history of Black radical thought will likely leave theaters with little idea of what the Panthers stood for outside of their 10-Point Program. The ideological divisions and Maoist tendencies of leading figures are obscured, with the rift between Huey Newton and Eldridge Cleaver largely reduced to a personality-driven feud between a paranoid drug-addled thug and a militant intellectual pontificating about revolution. Although reductionist, in some ways this blurring of the fine points of their politics is a shrewd move: Socialism may no longer be the dirty word it once was in American politics, but the Little Red Book has little claim to relevance outside a few isolated sects of the hard left.

LOUD & PROUD: Members of the Black Panther Party call for the release of jailed party leader Huey Newton at a 1969 rally in Oakland, California.

BREAKING OUT OF THE HOOD: Members of hip-hop group N.W.A as seen in *Straight Outta Compton*.

Although *Black Panthers* only has time to hit some of the Party's highlights, it is mostly successful in bringing out the continued relevance of a movement for collective liberation led by those most affected. While elders may snipe about its admittedly real limitations, the film offers an energizing and stylish introduction of the Panthers to a new generation. The Black Lives Matter movement could do worse than learning from the example — and the failures — of the Black Panther Party if they want to not only fight individual incidents of police brutality, but also organize against a system of racial domination. The Black Panthers eventually collapsed under the weight of state repression and internal conflict, but for a brief moment they were a *party* — a nationwide group with its own newspaper, community social programs and political platform that managed to unite the energies of thousands of militants in a common struggle. Whatever the organizing possibilities of social media, the activists of Black Twitter have yet to build a comparable infrastructure. *Straight Outta Compton* offers no such lessons, but it is a mostly entertaining 2.5 hours — and "Fuck tha Police" remains essential listening.



COURTESY PIRKLE JONES AND RUTH-MARION BARUCH



STRAIGHTOUTTACOMPTON.COM

EXHIBITIONS

PRAISE THE LORDS

“¡Presente! The Young Lords in New York”

BRONX MUSEUM OF THE ARTS
THROUGH OCTOBER 18

EL MUSEO DEL BARRIO
THROUGH DECEMBER 12

LOISAIDA CENTER
THROUGH DECEMBER 1

By Mike Newton

What can you do when your city doesn't care for you? If the people in your neighborhood are sick, but the city of New York refuses to provide public health services, what then? You can write newspaper editorials, and you can put in requests with the local officials, but if that doesn't work, well, maybe you just take what you need by force. On June 17, 1970, several members of the activist group known as the Young Lords ambushed and stole a tuberculosis-screening truck to use in their own underserved, Puerto-Rican-heavy neighborhoods. It would be easy enough to dismiss this as a brash, violent prank, but it worked: the city reluctantly supported the effort, and the Lords were able to screen over 770 people in just three days. In the July 3, 1970 issue of *Palante* — the bi-weekly newspaper edited and published by the Young Lords — group member Carl Pastor wrote, “The YOUNG LORDS PARTY has always said that the time will come when the people take over all the institutions and machinery that control and exploit our lives. On June 17, the YOUNG LORDS PARTY put this idea into practice.”

The Young Lords burned bright and fast: The organization was officially founded in 1969, and officially ended by 1972. They're not as famous now as some of their like-minded contemporaries like the Black Panthers or Students for a Democratic Society, but the Young Lords' legacy has an endless, sprawling quality to it, in that it seems to pop up everywhere. Some examples: The Last Poets, a group that arguably laid the groundwork for the entire hip-hop genre, was started in part by Felipe Luciano, who later became one of the first Young Lords. Sylvia Rivera was a legendary transgender rights activist and a Stonewall Riots participant, and also a Young Lord. Juan González, who is well known in progressive media circles as the co-host of *Democracy Now!*, was also Minister of Education for the Young Lords. Even Fox News has a connection: Geraldo Rivera got his start on TV as a legal spokesman for the Young Lords.

It's difficult to sum up the Young Lords. They were a Puerto Rican nationalist organization, a creative community with a profound effect on the artistic life of New York City and a powerfully idealistic group of radical revolutionaries who, like the Black Panthers, sought to build a socialist society from the ground up. Also like the Panthers, they were a paramilitary group, with regulation outfits and proudly-brandished assault rifles. Moreover, as the name says, they were young (at age 25, noted activist Richie Perez was one of the older members).

There are now three concurrent exhibitions on display across the city reflecting on the history and legacy of the Lords. “¡Presente! The Young Lords in New York” includes a straightforward documentary show at the Bronx Museum, a playful installation at El Museo del Barrio and a lovingly-detailed historical overview at the Loisaida Center. As institutions, both

El Museo and the Center can trace their respective lineages straight back to the Young Lords. In these exhibitions there are newspapers and posters, poems and songs, documentary films and black-and-white photos, and yet, in a way it feels like these exhibits are only just scratching the surface.

One important thing that these shows remind us is that New York used to be a much dirtier place. At the Bronx Museum, we see a spread from *Palante* with a collaged image of the Statue of Liberty looking down on a trash-strewn city street; “Amerikkka the Beautiful,” the text reads. Nearby is one of the strongest artworks in the show: Raphael Montañez Ortiz's *Archeological Find #21: The Aftermath*, a transfigured chunk of street trash (an old sofa) appearing as a sort of bloated, distressed body. Technically this piece predates the Lords, but the Lords dealt with similar ideas in their 1969 Garbage Offensive, in which they spread garbage across 110th Street and 3rd Avenue and then set it on fire in a sort of performance-art protest against urban poverty.

The Garbage Offensive was meant to be offensive in the sense of upsetting and shocking, but it was also an offensive, as in armed attack. Guns are everywhere in the Young Lords iconography. At El Museo, a circa-1970 Party poster (also recreated in a sculpture by contemporary artist Miguel Luciano) shows four assault rifles labeled “HEALTH,” “FOOD,” “HOUSING” and “EDUCATION”; the message is that the Lords were not shy about armed struggle in the name of justice. The tensions between the Lords' lofty goals and their paramilitary structure raise questions that weren't answered during their scant few years in New York: Can artistic freedom really flourish within a militaristic society? Can equality for women really exist within a male-dominated hierarchy?

In December 1969, just a few months after the Garbage Offensive, the Lords seized and occupied the First Spanish United Methodist Church on 111th Street. As with the TB truck, it was a violent action in the interest of tenderness and care: For the 11 days that they held the church, the Lords used it to host free breakfast programs and poetry readings. Looking back at the group's fraught history, in some ways the moment is lost in a had-to-be-there billow of youthful rebellion, societal tumult and ultra-specific local politics. But then, to see what they were seeking in this city — justice, well-being, support and space — it's hard not to relate. In the July 17, 1970 issue of *Palante*, Pablo Guzman wrote, “we decided to liberate the church's potential and open its doors.” In a city growing ever more walled-off, we need more reminders that the potential for liberation is there, waiting for the doors to be opened.

SELF-DETERMINATION IS A RIGHT: Supporters of the Young Lords turn out for a 1970 demonstration in New York City.

Maximo Colon,
Untitled,
c. 1970

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FRI OCT 29 • 7PM • \$5 SUGGESTED
BOOK READING: *THE DOG WALKER: AN ANARCHIST'S ENCOUNTERS WITH THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE CANINE*. The Dog Walker is the hilarious story of a relentless activist who also happened to be a dog walker for the rich and powerful.

SAT OCT 24 • 7PM • \$5 SUGGESTED
BOOK TALK: *VOICES OF THE PARIS COMMUNE*. Join historian and translator Mitchell Abidor for a talk on a new book that re-envision The Paris Commune of 1871 by presenting only the voices of people who lived through and participated in the Commune.

THU NOV 5 • 7PM • \$5 SUGGESTED
DISCUSSION: STOP GLOBAL STREET HARASSMENT. Holly Kearl, author of the new book *Stop Global Street Harassment: Growing Activism around the World* will discuss how street harassment is a human rights violation and the various ways that people, organizations and governments globally are working to end it.

HISTORY STATES

THE FORGOTTEN SIDE OF FOLK MUSIC

"Folk City: New York and the Folk Music Revival"
MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
THROUGH JANUARY 10

By John Cohen

To most people, especially those in New York, folk music has always had a political connotation. It was the soundtrack of political actions, the music heard on picket lines and at union meetings and rallies. It was identified as the music of the working class, the farmers and factory laborers.

But conceptually, "folklore" was defined by professors and academics. The word "folk" emerged as a way for the upper class to demarcate the culture of the lower class and was used by urbanites to distinguish themselves from those in rural areas. The people whom the term "folk" defined never used it to describe themselves or their culture. The word has suffered under this origin ever since, and after several hundred years, "folk" as applied to music has become a confused tangle devoid of specificity.

Entering "Folk City," now on view at the Museum of the City of New York, we see that the exhibition doesn't attempt to define folk. Instead, it plunges headfirst into how the idea of it was constructed in New York City between the 1930s and 1960s. One is inundated with images and the voice of Pete Seeger, reflecting his all-embracing contributions to creating the folk revival. The exhibition places great importance on the early "giants" of folk music: Seeger, Woody Guthrie, Lead Belly and ethnomusicologist Alan Lomax. Starting in the 1930s they spread their messages of social justice with sing-alongs, guitars and banjos. After a successful beginning among a small coterie, their idea of folk music became widespread in the media (for example, The Weaver's version of "Irene Goodnight," a song composed by Lead Belly, was a nationwide hit).

The folk revival movement came under attack during the Red Scare of the early 1950s and was almost brought to a halt by Congress and conservatives who blacklisted and censored left-leaning progressives and political radicals. But the momentum couldn't be stopped: kids who grew up singing folk songs at summer camps led by the likes of Seeger became a new generation of college radicals. Folk songs reemerged and entered the 1960s counterculture, the civil rights, peace and anti-nuclear movements and even, more recently, the Occupy movement.

LEAD BELLY'S GUITAR

The exhibition depicts the New York City folk music scene in great documentary form. It features film clips, 78 rpm record covers, posters and ephemera, including Lead Belly's actual guitar. The catalog for the show devotes almost 15 pages to the Washington Square "Right to Sing" protest of 1961, and almost 30 pages to Bob Dylan. The exhibition looks especially at folk music in Greenwich Village in the 1960s — indeed, even its title, "Folk City," comes from the name of a club in the Village that featured folk singers in those heady days.

However, it fails to mention the Jug Bands, the blues revivals or the bluegrass scene that dominated Washington Square. Also barely mentioned is the impact of Harry Smith's *Anthology of American Folk Music*, issued by Folkway Records in 1952, consisting of wonderful performances on commercial recordings from the 1920s and '30s. This anthology opened the doors of the folk revival to great traditional music and inspired the blues revival and the old time music scene.

"Folk City" conveys how the music became exploited as a commercial commodity by groups such as the Kingston Trio, the Limelighters and eventually Peter, Paul and Mary. Some critics have pointed out, rightly, that the exhibition's comes up short by celebrating the musicians who found a way to monetize folk music while omitting most of those who didn't.

There is a small section about the Friends of Old Time Music and the New Lost City Ramblers, who were dedicated to performing the traditional roots of this music, learned from old hillbilly and blues records and from the field recordings at the Library of Congress. As a member of the Ramblers, I was involved personally. We reintroduced fiddles, mandolin and autoharp to the folk revival. We made field recordings of mountaineers, sitting at their feet and learning from them. We brought them to New York City for solo concerts. We were building bridges at the same time as the civil rights movement was examining and challenging differences. Both were part of the same broad picture, and the exhibition devotes a lot of space to the role that topical songs and the activists played.

LIKE A PBS DOCUMENTARY

For years, the survivors of the folk revival have

been discussing the idea of creating a folk music museum in New York City. The problems they faced were never were about music, but about real estate and financing — "just looking for a home," as some old songs say. The exhibition at the Museum of the City of New York was organized and shaped by historians, not by musicians. With dramatic red walls and graphic displays, it ends up like a well-balanced documentary production for PBS. But in diligently covering such a wide spectrum and paying informed attention to all the chronology and issues, it leaves viewers knowing something about everything but not quite feeling the passion, commitment or challenge of it.

Folk music thrives on disputes, assertions and challenges to the establishment, along with its traditional roots. Stepping back, the folk revival may be seen from today's perspective as a tremendously vital tempest in a cultural teapot, which was and still is an integral part of New York City. In telling its story, "Folk City" is an intense show and a rare opportunity to see what went down. I am left wondering, though, if it will inspire anyone to pick up a guitar, banjo or fiddle and start singing.

John Cohen is a founding member of the New Lost City Ramblers as well as a musicologist, photographer and filmmaker. Since 1958, the New Lost City Ramblers have brought the diverse sounds of rural American string band music to audiences throughout the United States and the world.

MAKING MUSIC:

Young folk musicians play at Washington Square Park in 1962. The park was at the center of the folk music revival during the 1950s and early '60s.

FREDERICK KELLY, COURTESY MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

LOVE, INFIDELITY & NEW MONEY

The Awful Truth

DIRECTED BY MICHAEL HARDART
METROPOLITAN PLAYHOUSE
THROUGH OCTOBER 18

By David Meadow

How well do you know your own mind and memory? Have you ever repainted your own deeds with rosier colors? Has your sense of disappointment ever been so crushing that you felt you couldn't trust any of your other thoughts? Arthur Richman's play *The Awful Truth* asked these timeless questions in 1922, and it holds up as a seriocomic meditation on them. The Metropolitan Playhouse is now offering a consistently good, sometimes sterling, production of the work, best known to most audiences as a 1937 "screwball comedy" film with Cary Grant and Irene Dunne.

Both the play and film pivot on stormy relationships and infidelity, but the play is shorter on plot, and spends more time examining the social context of its era and the emotions that shape the characters' struggle. In it, a divorced socialite, Lucy Warriner, is set to marry self-made Oklahoma oil tycoon Daniel ("Dan") Leeson, and his proper aunt wants to make double-sure her divorce wasn't the result of some unseemly hanky-panky. The nephew and aunt even drag in Lucy's ex, Norman Satterly, and relentlessly press the two for reassurance, setting off a wave of he-said, she-said debate that makes the characters relive their grief and wallow in their greatest anxieties.

This could all be terribly maudlin the wrong hands, but it is strong performances, under the sure hand of director Michael Hardart, that really clinch this production's success. I could say good things about everyone, but I'll focus on some of the main players: Alexandra O'Daley is probably the most naturalistic of the cast as Lucy, betraying some residual 20-something rambunctiousness under



© JACOB J. GOLDBERG PHOTOGRAPHY

her jaded insouciance; Lucy's brother, Eustace, a milquetoast heir to privilege whom Lucy loves to snipe at, gets unnervingly convincing treatment from Benjamin Russell; and J.

Stephen Brantley steals the show as Dan, the oilman. With his fulsome, cigar-chomping masculinity, Brantley may be the most cartoonish of the lot, but he has very funny timing and makes it work. His accent seemed more Southern plantation owner than bootstrapping Midwesterner, which slightly weakened the important Old Money/New Money undercurrent to the conflict, but that was as far as my quibbles went.

The visuals of the play deserve special mention. From the moment you walk into the very small theater — it can't be more than 80 seats — a grand set, full of pains-taking grace notes, defies this restriction. I could spend half this review on Alex Roe's labor of love if space allowed. The action changes location between the first and second acts, and I won't spoil exactly how that's accomplished, but I had to resist the urge to give a premature standing ovation. The sumptuous period costumes are as impressive as the set: in one example, Norman (the ex-husband) changes from plum-colored trousers, crimson necktie and tweed sport coat to a three-piece suit in the course of a single day, which is an idlerich detail that Sidney Fortner could easily have dispensed with, but didn't.

And what of the play's resonance for us now? As much as today's culture wars are on our minds, both the permissive attitudes of the 1920s and the reaction against them were presumably of concern to original audiences. I forgot that the regular drinking throughout the play was illegal until an exchange with the oilman's aunt (a fine Emily Jon Mitchell). This is a prim, no-nonsense matriarch, active with the Ladies' Auxiliary, and just the type that would have wanted to ban alcohol. Norman takes a dig at the aunt's insuffer-

able moralizing about Proper Relationships, pleading resentfully, "You've already taken away our liquor; are you going to deprive us of everything else?"

The exchange is both dated and evergreen, and seems to beg the old question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" The screwball comedy more or less allows relationships, and their betrayals, to remain the business of any and all lovers involved. Hypocrisy is a straightforward, vaguely universal sin in the movie: the voice teacher Irene Dunne's character is fooling around with protests, "I've never been involved in a scandal!" to which Cary Grant's husband character instantly retorts, "You've never been caught." This seems tame next to a much more subversive, layered, even Oscar Wilde-ish, exchange in the original play: The aunt huffs, "Indiscretion is a great sin in society!" and the accused socialite smirks, "Indiscretion is the only sin in society." What Indiscretion and Society are we talking about?

Indiscretions often uncover awful truths, and the title of the play is nominally about the anguish of love betrayed and shame before society. Surely, though, it can allude to each of our individual struggles to reconcile ourselves to our individual truths. By the time 1937 rolled around — a bad year, even for the Depression — the *Awful Truth* was one of grinding poverty, and it was precisely what people went to the movies to escape. Now that economic inequality is back at Gilded Age levels, the bread has gotten sweeter and the circuses more spectacular to effect widespread distraction. There are many awful truths out there now, and it looks like it will take a committed minority to face them down.

WHEN LOVE AND MONEY CLASH: The Metropolitan Playhouse's staging of *The Awful Truth* is a comic meditation on the hypocrisies of love.

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FALL TERM 2015 CLASSES

MONDAYS

EXTRACTION | EXPULSIONS | RESISTANCE
10 CLASSES beginning Sept 28: 7:30 pm
Lisa Maya Knauer and Fred Murphy

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION: 1917-1921
12 CLASSES beginning Sept 28: 7:30 pm
Revolutions Study Group



TUESDAYS

READING GRAMSCI:
Hegemony, War of Position and the Historic Bloc
4 CLASSES beginning Oct 6: 7:30 pm
Harmony Goldberg
READING SESSION ON MÉZÁROS'
Challenge and Burden of Historical Time
12 CLASSES beginning Oct 20: 5:30 pm
21st Century Class Struggles Task Force

WEDNESDAYS

Marcuse's REASON AND REVOLUTION
8 CLASSES beginning Sept 20: 7:30 pm
Chad Kautzer
CAPITAL: Volume 1
10 CLASSES beginning Oct 7: 5:30 pm
Juliet Ucelli

THURSDAYS

Outside Views/Inside Stories: ALGERIA
12 CLASSES beginning Oct 1: 7:30 pm
Indigenous Peoples' Reading Group
BALDWIN/FANON: Post-Colonialism
9 CLASSES beginning Oct 15: 5:30 pm
Kazembe Balagun

FRIDAYS

Hegel's PHILOSOPHY OF RIGHT
12 CLASSES beginning Sept 18: 6:00 pm
Russell Dale



OCTOBER EVENTS

FRIDAY • OCT 9 • 7:30 PM

CLANDESTINE OCCUPATIONS
an evening with Diana Block & her new book from PM Press

FRIDAY • OCT 16 • 7:00 PM

RESISTENCIA: The Fight for Aguan Valley
A documentary presentation of class struggle in Honduras with filmmaker Jesse Freeston

MONDAY • OCT 19 • 7:30 PM

BRICS: An Anti-Capitalist Critique
an evening with Patrick Bond & his new book co-sponsored with Haymarket Books

THURSDAY • OCT 22 • 7:30 PM

SOUTHERN INSURGENCY: The Coming of the Global Working Class
an evening with Manny Ness & his new book co-sponsored with Pluto Press

**Classes and events at
The Brooklyn Commons**
388 Atlantic Avenue/Brooklyn

marxedproject.org

THUR OCT 8

6:30pm • \$5

DISCUSSION: THE CHANGING FACE OF ACTIVISM.

This discussion on the evolution of social change activism from the Civil Rights Movement to Black Lives Matter will be moderated by Alethia Jones of 1199SEIU and will include veteran activist Barbara Smith, Joo-Hyun Kang of Communities United for Police Reform and Jose Lopez of Make the Road NY. Brooklyn Historical Society
128 Pierrepont St
718-222-4111 • brooklynhistory.org

THUR OCT 8–SAT OCT 24

8pm • \$18

PERFORMANCE: MACBETH (OF THE OPPRESSED).

This queer reimagining of Shakespeare's classic will feature the Macbeth husbands and the Macduff wives at the center of it all, and explore gender bias to boot. The Theater at the 14th Street Y
344 E 14th St
646-395-4310 • 14streety.org

WED OCT 14

7pm • \$10

DISCUSSION/EXHIBITION:**SOUTHERN RITES.**

National uproar forced Georgia's Montgomery County High School to racially integrate its prom last year. Photojournalist Gillian Laub will talk about her 12-year visual study of the community, which introduced the rest of the country to the racial tensions in its prom rituals and more. A book signing will follow. International Center of Photography
1114 Ave of the Americas
212-857-0000 • icp.org

THUR OCT 15

6pm • Free

TRAINING: RACIAL JUSTICE FOR WHITE PEOPLE.

This training seminar will focus on racial justice, accountability and allyship. JFREJ has created the training to cultivate anti-racism within the organization, with the goal of becoming a more empowering political home for Jews of color and others who have been marginalized within the Jewish community. Please visit the website for the training registration form. Jews for Racial & Economic Justice
330 7th Ave, Suite 1901
212-647-8966 • jfrej.org

SAT OCT 17

11am–5pm • Free

EVENT: SUPER SABADO: DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS.

Join in the 3,000-year-old Mexican celebration of commemorating the dead. Festivities include music, performances, face painting and art-making at various locations. El Museo del Barrio
1230 5th Ave
212-831-7272 • elmuseo.org

SAT OCT 17

8pm • \$18 suggested donation

MUSIC: JOLIE RICKMAN TRIBUTE CONCERT.

A sweeping lineup of musicians will honor the memory and achievements of singer-songwriter activist Jolie Rickman, who died in 2005. On set for the night are Barry Kornhauser, Bev Grant and the Dissident Daughters, Colleen Kattau and Dos XX, Elisabeth DeMaria, Jamie McCallum and Nickolas Orth. Peoples' Voice Café
At the Community Church of New York Unitarian Universalist
40 E 35th St
peoplesvoicecafe.org • 212-787-3903

TUE OCT 20

6:30–8:30pm • Free

DISCUSSION: LIFE AFTER SURVEILLANCE IN BAY RIDGE'S MUSLIM COMMUNITY.

With a city administration that says it's moving away from the heavy-handed surveillance of Muslim neighborhoods that has characterized the post-9/11 era, community leaders will discuss whether life for Muslims in Bay Ridge has changed. Brooklyn Historical Society
128 Pierrepont St
718-222-4111 • brooklynhistory.org

TUE OCT 20

9–11am • Free

DISCUSSION: HURRICANE SANDY +3: BUILDING RESILIENT NEIGHBORHOODS.

A panel of neighborhood recovery and climate change experts will join organizers from communities affected by the devastation of Hurricane Sandy to examine the post-storm status of social infrastructure and grassroots organizing in the areas that were hardest hit. The New School
Theresa Lang Community Center, Arnold Hall
55 W 13th St, 2nd Fl

212-229-5418 • centernyc.org

THUR OCT 22

7:30pm • Free

BOOK LAUNCH: SOUTHERN INSURGENCY: THE MAKING OF THE GLOBAL WORKING CLASS.

Drawing on extensive field research he did in South Africa, India and China, CUNY professor of political science Immanuel Ness will discuss his new book on the rise of an industrial proletariat in the Global South and the prospects for new approaches to international solidarity and anti-capitalist struggle. Brooklyn Commons
388 Atlantic Ave
thecommonbrooklyn.org • marx-project.org

THUR OCT 22–TUE OCT 27

Various times • Various prices starting at \$12

CINEMA: NEW FEST: NEW YORK'S LGBT FILM FESTIVAL.

Featuring several dozen films, docs, shorts and panels. The primary venue will be Chelsea Bow Tie Cinemas, with select screenings at the LGBT Community Center. newfest.org



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—Chelsea E. Manning (Guardian Op-Ed, 27 May 2015)

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WED OCT 28

6:30pm • Free
DISCUSSION: RETHINKING FERGUSON THROUGH THE PRISM OF SUBURBIA.
A panel of scholars, journalists and activists will discuss Ferguson in relation to the impact of geography on racial dynamics in America. Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture
515 Malcolm X Blvd
917-275-6975 • nypl.org

THUR OCT 29

7pm • Free
BOOK TALK: *HOW THE OTHER HALF BANKS: EXCLUSION, EXPLOITATION, AND THE THREAT TO DEMOCRACY*.
As major banks have grown in size and political power, they've abandoned any public service purpose they once had. Author Mehrsa Baradaran will be in conversation with Zephyr Teachout and Kathryn Judge. Book Culture
536 W 112th
212-865-1588 • bookculture.com

SAT OCT 31

2pm • Free
SYMPOSIUM: *WAITING FOR YESTERDAY: PAGES FROM A STREET KID'S LIFE*.
Authors and performance artists will explore Michael Parenti's memoir about growing up in Italian Harlem and the childhood influences that set the stage for his far-reaching career as a public intellectual on the left. Mulberry Street Public Library, Community Room
10 Jersey St
718-499-5446 • vitomarcantonioforum.org

SUN NOV 1

2:30pm • \$12
DISCUSSION: THE "JOOK SING" GENERATION.
What was life like for the American children of Chinese immigrants to grow up in New York City during the 1940s-'60s? Jean Lau Chin discusses how this "jook sing" generation navigated their lives in New York. Museum of Chinese in America
215 Centre St

212-619-4785 • mocanyc.org

WED NOV 4

6:30pm • \$16
DISCUSSION: EXAMINING URBAN POVERTY TODAY, A CENTURY AFTER RIIS.
During the late-1800s Gilded Age, journalist and photographer Jacob Riis broke ground with his documentations of how New York City's poor lived. With extreme income inequality and a shortage of affordable housing making for a Second Gilded Age, a panel of historians and journalists will discuss the continuing import of Riis's work to poverty in New York City. Museum of the City of New York
1220 5th Ave
212-534-1672 • mcny.org



MICHAEL DEKKER

DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS:

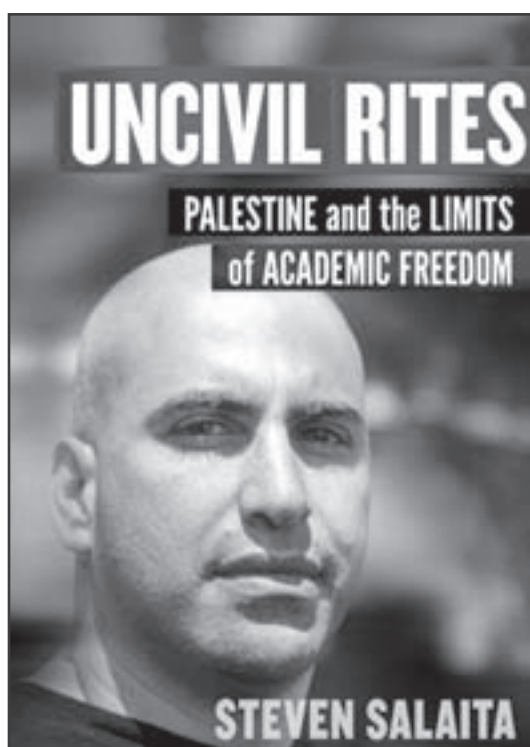
El Museo del Barrio will continue the 3,000-year-old Mexican celebration of the Day of the Dead on Oct. 17.

QUEERING MACBETH:

A reimagining of one of Shakespeare's classic plays will be staged at The Theater at the 14th Street Y from Oct. 8-24.

"Steven Salaita's astute meditations on racism, settler colonialism, anti-Semitism, and Israeli apartheid skillfully convert the inauspicious conditions surrounding his ousting by the trustees of the University of Illinois into an opportunity to elevate the campaign for Palestine solidarity to a new level. As US antiracist consciousness grows broader and deeper, *Uncivil Rites* argues for the internationalization of that consciousness and for Palestine as a polestar of our struggle."

—ANGELA Y. DAVIS



In the summer of 2014, renowned American Indian studies professor Steven Salaita had his appointment to a tenured professorship revoked by the board of trustees of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Salaita's employment was terminated in response to his public tweets criticizing the Israeli government's summer assault on Gaza.

Salaita's firing generated a huge public outcry, with thousands petitioning for his reinstatement, and more than five thousand scholars pledging to boycott UIUC. His case raises important questions about academic freedom, free speech on campus, and the movement for justice in Palestine.



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The MNN Firehouse on 104th Street hosts community events and Community Builders media education training. The Firehouse is also home to the Youth Media Center, offering programs, internships, and programming for young people ages 15-24.

Email firehouse@mnn.org for more information and follow the Firehouse on facebook.com/elbarriocommunitycenter.